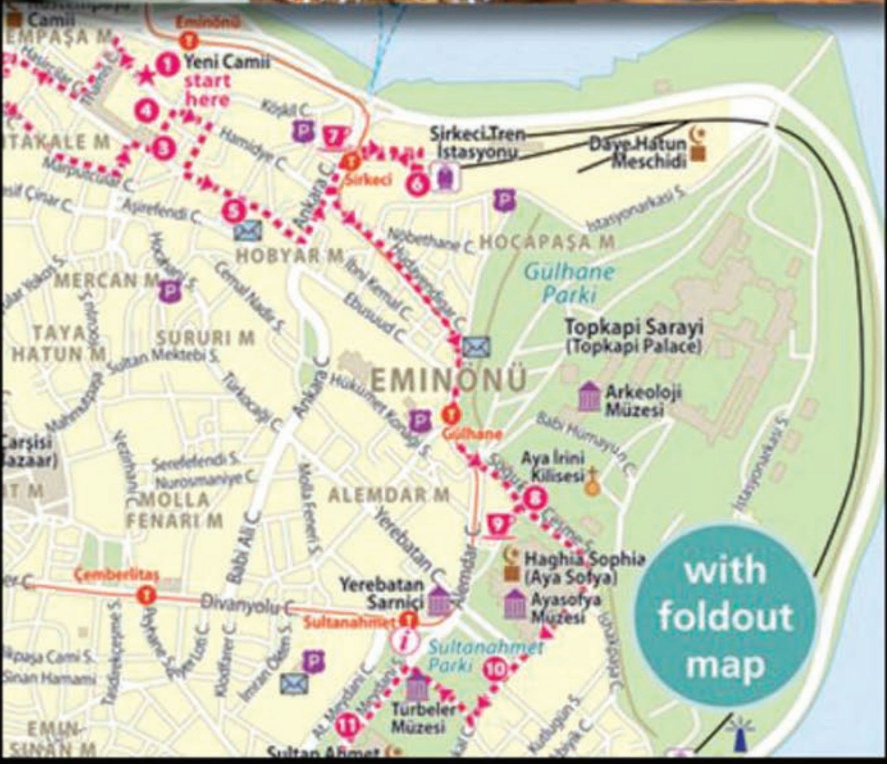
Frommer's™

Istanbul day BY day™

18 Smart Ways to See the City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ALEMDAR M
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Haghia Sophia (Aya Sofya)
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Yerebatan Sarnıci
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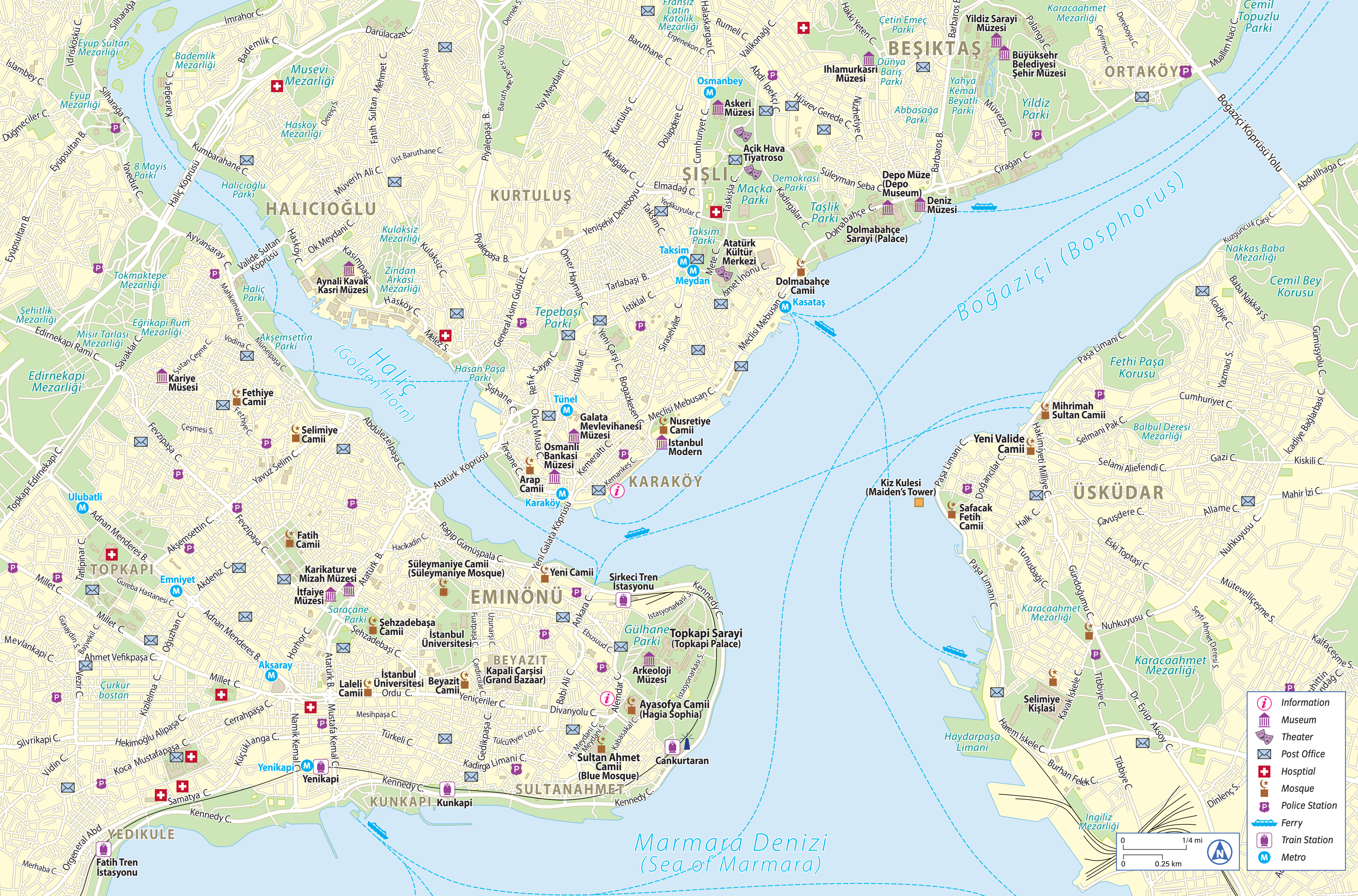
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KUNKAPI
TOPKAPI
YEDIKULE
ÜSKÜDAR
Boğaziçi (Bosphorus)
Haliç (Golden Horn)
Marmara Denizi (Sea of Marmara)
Yildiz Sarayi Müzesi
Büyükşehr Belediyesi Şehir Müzesi
Ihlamurkasri Müzesi
Dünya Bariş Parki
Çetin Emeç Parki
Karacaahmet Mezarliği
Cemil Topuzlu Parki
Yahya Kemal Beyatli Parki
Yildiz Parki
Abbasağa Parki
Osmanbey
Askeri Müzesi
Açik Hava Tiyatroso
Demokrasi Parki
Maçka Parki
Taşlik Parki
Depo Müze (Depo Museum)
Deniz Müzesi
Dolmabahçe Sarayi (Palace)
Dolmabahçe Camii
Kasataş
Taksim
Taksim Parki
Meydan
Atatürk Kültür Merkezi
Nakkas Baba Mezarliği
Cemil Bey Korusu
Fethi Paşa Korusu
Mihrimah Sultan Camii
Bälbül Deresi Mezarliği
Yeni Valide Camii
Kiz Kulesi (Maiden's Tower)
Safacak Fetih Camii
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Hasan Paşa Parki
Tepebaşi Parki
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Osmanli Bankasi Müzesi
Arap Camii
Karaköy
Nusretiye Camii
Istanbul Modern
Ulubatli
Emniyet
Aksaray
Fatih Camii
Karikatur ve Mizah Müzesi
İtfaiye Müzesi
Saraçane Parki
Şehzadebaşa Camii
Süleymaniye Camii (Süleymaniye Mosque)
Yeni Camii
Sirkeci Tren Istasyonu
Gülhane Parki
Topkapi Sarayi (Topkapi Palace)
Arkeoloji Müzesi
Ayasofya Camii (Hagia Sophia)
İstanbul Üniversitesi
Kapali Çarşisi (Grand Bazaar)
Beyazit Camii
Laleli Camii
İstanbul Üniversitesi
Sultan Ahmet Camii (Blue Mosque)
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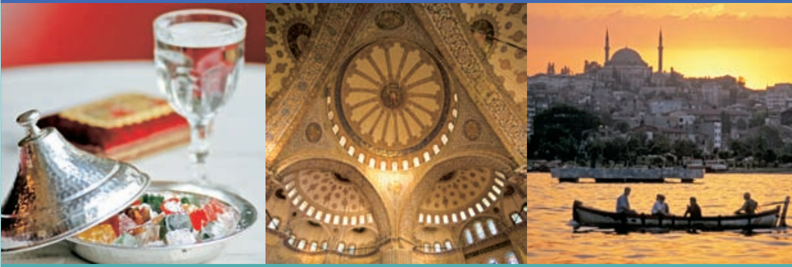
Frommer's™

Istanbul
day BY day™

1st Edition



by Emma Levine

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A Note from the Editorial Director

Organizing your time. That's what this guide is all about.

Other guides give you long lists of things to see and do and then expect you to fit the pieces together. The Day by Day guides are different. These guides tell you the best of everything, and then they show you how to see it *in the smartest, most time-efficient way*. Our authors have designed detailed itineraries organized by time, neighborhood, or special interest. And each tour comes with a bulleted map that takes you from stop to stop.

Hoping to gaze up at the domed ceiling at the Süleymaniye Mosque, check out Istanbul's contemporary art scene or watch fishermen where the Mamara Sea meets the Bosphorus? Planning to lose yourself in the music emanating from Galip Dede Caddesi, savor Turkish delicacies at the market in Gazlentep or take a dramatic cable car ride up Pierre Loti Kahvesi? Whatever your interest or schedule, the Day by Days give you the smartest routes to follow. Not only do we take you to the top attractions, hotels, and restaurants, but we also help you access those special moments that locals get to experience—those "finds" that turn tourists into travelers.

The Day by Days are also your top choice if you're looking for one complete guide for all your travel needs. The best hotels and restaurants for every budget, the greatest shopping values, the wildest nightlife—it's all here.

Why should you trust our judgment? Because our authors personally visit each place they write about. They're an independent lot who say what they think and would never include places they wouldn't recommend to their best friends. They're also open to suggestions from readers. If you'd like to contact them, please send your comments our way at feedback@frommers.com, and we'll pass them on.

Enjoy your Day by Day guide—the most helpful travel companion you can buy. And have the trip of a lifetime.

Warm regards,

Kelly Regan

Kelly Regan, Editorial Director
Frommer's Travel Guides

About the Author

Emma was born in Yorkshire, England, and fell in love with Istanbul on her first 'real' traveling in 1989, as a student. Since then, she lived in Hong Kong and India and worked as a sports photographer and author, specialising in Indian cricket culture—and always happy to explain the rules of cricket to the uninitiated.

Author of books including *A Game of Polo with a Headless Goat,* depicting her journey around Asia discovering traditional sports, and writer and presenter of documentaries for National Geographic channel, she is now based in London but still travels far and wide.

Emma is the author and photographer for *Dublin Day by Day.*

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Love and thanks to my fantastic Istanbul host, Mick Darbyshire, who always offers me a home away from home.

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In Istanbul, the crew at Les Art Turcs were always generous with their time.

An Additional Note

Please be advised that travel information is subject to change at any time—and this is especially true of prices. We therefore suggest that you write or call ahead for confirmation when making your travel plans. The authors, editors, and publisher cannot be held responsible for the experiences of readers while traveling. Your safety is important to us, however, so we encourage you to stay alert and be aware of your surroundings.

Star Ratings, Icons & Abbreviations

Every hotel, restaurant, and attraction listing in this guide has been ranked for quality, value, service, amenities, and special features using a **star-rating system.** Hotels, restaurants, attractions, shopping, and nightlife are rated on a scale of zero stars (recommended) to three stars (exceptional). In addition to the star-rating system, we also use a **kids icon** to point out the best bets for families. Within each tour, we recommend cafes, bars or restaurants where you can take a break. Each of these stops appears in a shaded box marked with a coffee cup–shaped bullet ☕.

The following **abbreviations** are used for credit cards:

AE	American Express	DISC	Discover	V	Visa
DC	Diners Club	MC	MasterCard		

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A Note on Prices

In the "Take a Break" and "Best Bets" sections of this book, we have used a system of dollar signs to show a range of costs for 1 night in a hotel (the price of a double-occupancy room) or the cost of an entree (main meal) at a restaurant. Use the following table to decipher the dollar signs:

Hotels

$ = Under €80
$$ = €80-120
$$$ = €120-200
$$$$ = €200-300
$$$$$ = over €300

Restaurants

$ = under 8 YTL
$$ = 8-15 YTL
$$$ = 15-30 YTL
$$$$ = over 30 YTL

An Invitation to the Reader

In researching this book, we discovered many wonderful places—hotels, restaurants, shops, and more. We're sure you'll find others. Please tell us about them, so we can share the information with your fellow travelers in upcoming editions. If you were disappointed with a recommendation, we'd love to know that, too. Please write to:

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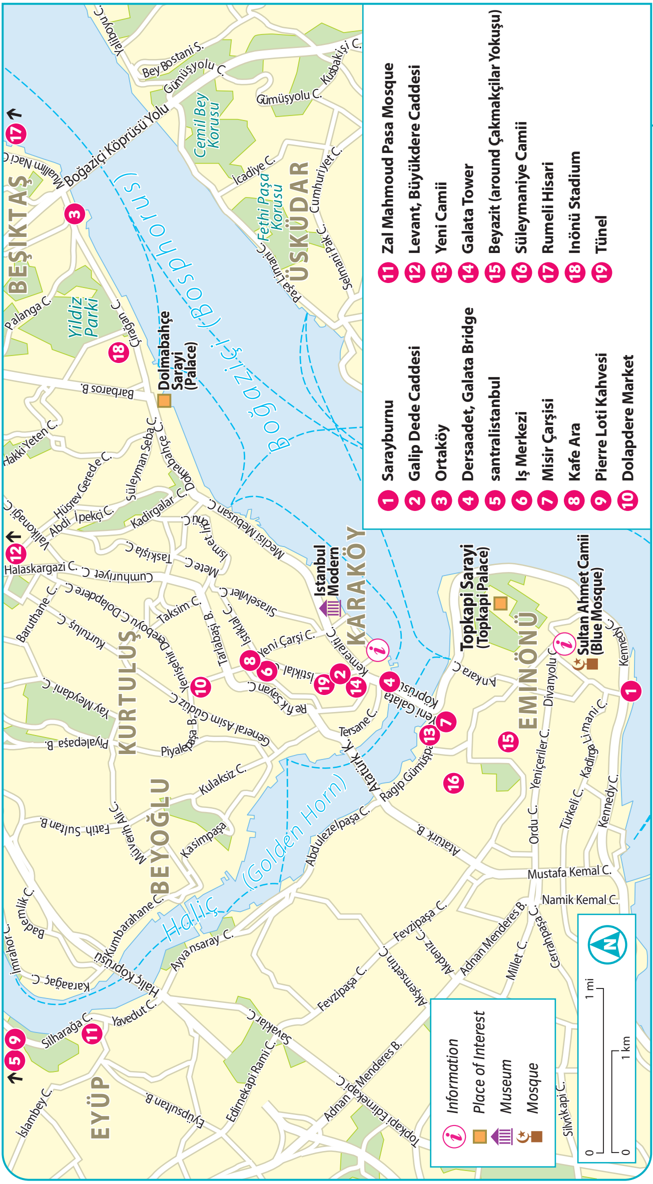
19 Favorite
Moments

19 Favorite **Moments**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Haliç (Golden Horn)
Dolmabahçe Sarayi (Palace)
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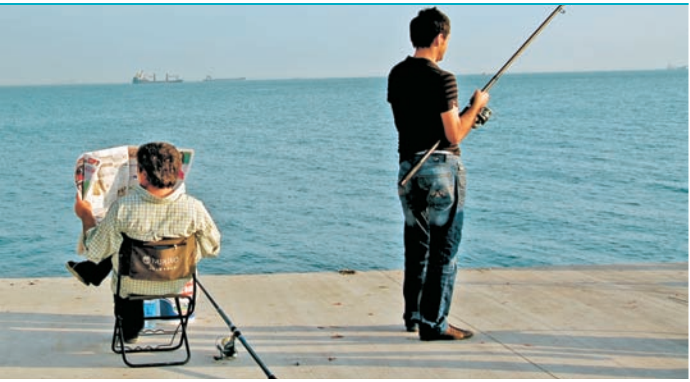
① Sarayburnu
② Galip Dede Caddesi
③ Ortaköy
④ Dersaadet, Galata Bridge
⑤ santralistanbul
⑥ Iş Merkezi
⑦ Misir Çarşisi
⑧ Kafe Ara
⑨ Pierre Loti Kahvesi
⑩ Dolapdere Market
⑪ Zal Mahmoud Pasa Mosque
⑫ Levant, Büyükdere Caddesi
⑬ Yeni Camii
⑭ Galata Tower
⑮ Beyazit (around Çakmakçilar Yokuşu)
⑯ Süleymaniye Camii
⑰ Rumeli Hisari
⑱ Inönü Stadium
⑲ Tünel

19 Favorite **Moments**

In the summer of 1989 I traveled to Istanbul for the first time, the start of my student inter-railing journey. Strolling around Seraglio Point towards Galata Bridge, I breathed in deeply, turned to my traveling companion and declared 'I think I'm in love', of this magnificent city. Some two decades later, after dozens of journeys and a period of living here, I feel exactly the same way.



Watch the fishermen at Seraglio Point.

❶ **Strolling around the coastline at Sarayburnu (Seraglio Point),** where the Marmara Sea meets the Bosphorus, to watch the fishermen. *See p 75.*

❷ **Wandering down Galip Dede Caddesi** and hearing the sounds emerge from the music shops, everything from electric guitars and drum kits to traditional instruments like saz and ney. I was even inspired here to buy a second-hand accordion! *See p 93.*

❸ **Eating kumpir, (filled baked potato)** followed by a waffle stuffed with fresh fruit and chocolate sauce at Ortaköy's waterfront on a summer's night. A calorie-counter's or cholesterol-carer's nightmare. Pure bliss. *See p 21.*

❹ **Playing endless games of backgammon at Dersaadet on Galata Bridge.** I learnt the game properly at this very bar, and things can get really addictive, especially when the competition gets tense . . . It's a bit of a cliché, but the sunset really does look fantastic from here. *See p 10.*

❺ **Seeing contemporary art at santralistanbul,** the city's newest art space. This old Ottoman power station has the height for mammoth sculptures and installations, a great location to see what today's Turkish artists have to offer. *See p 32.*

❻ **Rummaging for bargain clothes at Iş Merkezi.** True, most of what's on offer is trashy, but a little perseverance can result in cut-price designer treasures. And what's more satisfying than that? *See p 95.*

❼ **Buying—and eating—fresh pistachios from Osmanoğlu in Misir Çarşisi.** This has turned me into a pistachio snob; nowhere else in the world seems to have the same crisp, salty, concentrated flavor as Turkish pistachios, especially those from the city of Gaziantep. While at the

Socks and runner beans—Dolapdere's eclectic collection.

market, I also load up with the best black olives. *See p 9.*

⑧ **Having coffee at Kafe Ara,** surrounded by the photographs by Istanbul's Ara Güler (b. 1928). A real 'café society' feel, with the great photographer himself popping in most lunchtimes. *See p 111.*

⑨ **Taking the teleferik to Pierre Loti Kahvesi on a warm summer evening.** Not that I'm averse to a hearty walk uphill through Eyup's cemetery, but sometimes the cable-car ride is the most dramatic way to approach the hilltop. *See p 59.*

⑩ **Buying flowery socks and fresh veggies at Dolapdere market on Sundays**, where the Tarlibaşi locals stock up on their weekly goodies. As an Istanbul shopping experience, this is a whole different ball game. *See p 95.*

⑪ **Listening to the Mehter band rehearse at Zal Mahmoud Pasa Mosque,** before they disappear and change into traditional Ottoman costume of baggy trousers, striped cummerbunds and waistcoats, before parading to the main square. *See p 60.*

⑫ **Gazing at the neon-lit skyscrapers at Levant,** Istanbul's nearest thing to a scene from New York. Istanbul isn't all mosques and palaces!

⑬ **Dodging the pigeons while climbing the stairs to Yeni Camii,** one of the best spots to admire the Golden Horn and Galata Bridge. *See p 71.*

⑭ **Ascending Galata Tower** and circling the viewing gallery a dozen times for another memorable view, which still wows me after so many times. Get an eyeful of those rooftops! *See p 11.*

⑮ **Exploring the backstreets around Beyazit,** where it seems that every backstreet has hammering emerging from the busy workshops. *See p 80.*

⑯ **Gazing up at the domed ceiling at Süleymaniye Camii.** At least in this mammoth mosque it's possible to get a semblance of peace—and Sinan's ceilings are certainly something. *See p 8.*

⑰ **Scrambling the walls at Rumeli Hisari,** among wild flowers growing out of the towers, with a Bosphorus backdrop. *See p 45.*

⑱ **Cheering Beşiktaş scoring the winning goal.** Need I say more? *See p 134.*

⑲ **Talking to cats in Tünel.** The plethora of Istanbul's street cats are looked after pretty well, dining on food scraps from local restaurants. My favorite is a Turkish Van cat, a breed famous for having one amber and one blue eye. *See p 63.* ●

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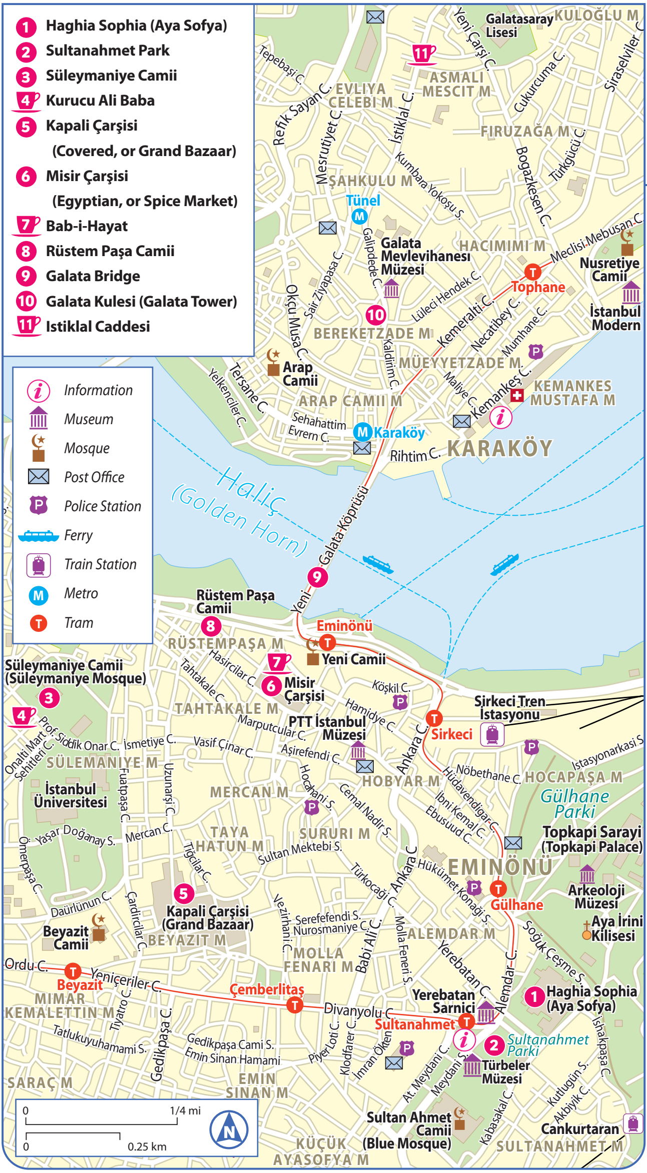
The Best Full-Day Tours

The Best **in One Day**



1. **Haghia Sophia (Aya Sofya)**
2. **Sultanahmet Park**
3. **Süleymaniye Camii**
4. **Kurucu Ali Baba**
5. **Kapali Çarşisi (Covered, or Grand Bazaar)**
6. **Misir Çarşisi (Egyptian, or Spice Market)**
7. **Bab-i-Hayat**
8. **Rüstem Paşa Camii**
9. **Galata Bridge**
10. **Galata Kulesi (Galata Tower)**
11. **Istiklal Caddesi**

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Beyazit
Çemberlitaş
Yerebatan Sarnici
Haghia Sophia (Aya Sofya)
MIMAR KEMALETTIN M
Tiyatro C.
Gedikpaşa C.
Divanyolu C.
Sultanahmet
İshakpaşa C.
Tatlukuyuhamami S.
Gedikpaşa Cami S.
Emin Sinan Hamami
Piyerloti C.
Klodfarer C.
İmran Öktem
At Meydani C.
Meydani S.
Sultanahmet Parki
Türbeler Müzesi
Kutlugün S.
Akbiyik C.
SARAÇ M
EMIN SINAN M
Kabasakal C.
Sultan Ahmet Camii (Blue Mosque)
Cankurtaran
KÜÇÜK AYASOFYA M
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Istanbul's history clusters around Sultanahmet, site of the ancient capital, and centerpiece to the Ottoman Empire. Even today, this area is considered the old part of Istanbul's European side. Over the Haliç (Golden Horn, an 'arm' of the Bosphorus) to another, far different European side, is the thoroughly modern Beyoğlu area. This busy tour kicks off with the ethereal Haghia Sophia, ending on Istiklal Caddesi — if you have enough energy left. **START: Tram to Sultanahmet.**

① **kids** ★★★ **Haghia Sophia (Aya Sofya).** One of Istanbul's most famous and popular attractions, it's no wonder that there are snaking queues to enter this huge Byzantine church, with dusky red exterior and huge domes. Although an earlier church was built on this spot, its present form dates back to mid-6th-century when rebuilt by Emperor Justinian I. I always start by wandering its dimly lit first floor, which gives more of a feeling of peace and the sheer size of its magnificent 56m-high dome (although the scaffolding for long-running work doesn't help). Head up the stairs to the upper gallery for a closer look at the 10th-century mosaics, especially of Christ flanked by Emperor Constantine IX and his wife, Empress Zoe. Disputes have been bubbling for years, most recently during the 2006 visit by Pope Benedict XVI, over whether Haghia Sophia should be a mosque (officially renamed as Aya Sofya), cathedral or museum. There were fears — and protests — that if the Pope prayed there, it would be a severe provocation to Islamic sensitivities. 🕘 *90 min. Aya Sofya Meydani, Sultanahmet.* ☎ *0212 522 1750. Admission 10 YTL. Tues–Sun 9am–4.30pm (summer 9am–7pm). Tram: Sultanahmet.*

② **kids** ★ **Sultanahmet Park.** It's the view from the benches here that I love; the fountain in the middle lies between the striking Sultanahmet Camii (Blue Mosque, see p 15) and **Haghia Sophia**. A good place to sit, savor the location, and recharge the batteries with a corn-on-the cob (*misir*) from the nearby carts. Years ago, during my earliest visits to the city, this was not an area to relish — it bordered on the sleazy. Now it's a sublime location where everyone gathers and walks its well-laid paths. Even better if you can come here at night when these monoliths are spot-lit — amazingly it was only in the past few years that **Haghia Sophia** was lit up at night. This area is packed at *iftar* (breaking the fast meal), with picnicking locals breaking their fast

Take a break at Sultanahmet Park.

during Ramadan. *Open 24 hrs. Tram: Sultanahmet.*

③ **kids ★★★ Süleymaniye Camii.** One of the masterpieces of Mimar Sinan (1489–1588), the great Ottoman architect, this is my favorite Istanbul location, often a real escape from the crowds. With a huge central dome and four slender minarets, this was, like many great mosques, built as a *külliye*, a complex once housing a caravanserai (resting place for travelers), hospital, *medrese* (religious school) and tombs. Built in the mid-16th century under the order of Süleyman I, or the Süleyman the Magnificent (see *A Brief History*, p 170), it also houses his tomb. If you visit that first, its marble pillars, hand-painted tiles from Iznik and neat wooden alcoves contrast rather sharply with the more modest tomb of his wife, Roxelana. Major refurbishment to the interior is due to finish late 2009, but even if still closed, I adore wandering its peaceful grounds, especially around the rose-clad gravestones. The interior is breathtaking, its 53m-high dome soaring above the subdued lighting from the tiny stained-glass windows, made by Ibrahim 'the Mad' (1615–1648), as nicknamed due to his eccentricities. 🕘 *1 hr. Prof Siddique Sami Onar Caddesi.* ☎ *0212 513 3608. Admission free. Open daily 9am–9pm.*

4 ★★ kids Kurucu Ali Baba. The first of a string of tiny lokantas (simple restaurants) facing Süleymaniye Mosque, this has been serving up simple, tasty *kuru fasulye* (white beans stewed with lamb) since 1939. Perfect for a no-frills lunch with the locals. *1/3 Prof Siddik Sami Onar Caddesi, Süleymaniye.* ☎ *0212 520 7655. $.*

⑤ **kids ★★ Kapali Çarşisi (Covered, or Grand Bazaar).** You can happily spend half a day getting lost around the crowded Kapali Çarşisi (Grand Bazaar), and even those who hate shopping will love the labyrinthine walk through a piece of history with boisterous shouts of traders, dazzling gold stalls, colorful ceramics and mannequins draped with scarlet leather jackets. The facts alone are staggering: over

Ornate domed ceilings at Süleymaniye Camii.

4000 shops, around 60 lanes and over five centuries of hearty trading. Built by Mehmet II soon after the conquest of Constantinople in 1453 (see *A Brief History*, p 170), the domed roofs and thick stone streets still survive, although dazzling machine-made ceramics and souvenirs have replaced the traditional trades like quilt- and fez-making. Previously, natural daylight from the ceiling illuminated the entire market; now most rely on gleaming shop-fronts for light. The biggest changes are around **Iç Bedesten,** the oldest part of the bazaar and once a warehouse, now the venue of yet more new cafés (seemingly identical) every time I visit. Here some of the traditional trades are still booming, like the carpet dealers, gold and leather stores, and a more peaceful ambience in **Zincirli Han,** a picturesque leafy courtyard. But generally, the air is thick with sales patter, which means (a) bargaining and (b) drinking tea — but don't enter the bargaining process unless you really want to buy something. Check out the sturdy entrance gates and outside stalls, where many of the locals grab a bargain especially for clothes. If you have the energy, walk a few minutes from Kapali Çarşisi to Valide Han, an old trade courtyard (see *Neighborhood Walks*, p 84); if not, get the tram straight to Eminönü for Misir Çarşisi. 🕘 *anything from 1 to 3 hrs. Open Mon–Sat 9.30am–7pm. Tram: Beyazit; or bus 61B from Taskim.*

Peaceful courtyard at Grand Bazaar's Zincirli Han.

⑥ **kids** ★★ **Misir Çarşisi (Egyptian or Spice Market).** The L-shaped market, built in 1660 to finance **Yeni Camii** (New Mosque; see p 71) was once filled to the brim with piles of fresh peppercorns, coriander, henna and dried herbs brought from Egypt. Now it's more likely boxes of apple tea, Tshirts or, in latter years, gold and fabric shops with food stalls dotted throughout selling syrupy *baklava* and *lokum* (Turkish delight). The domed ceilings are a delight, if you can inch your way past the crowds to see them. If it's spices and dried foods you're after, concentrate on the stalls running along the outside wall of the market, including Osmanoğlu, my favorite place for the freshest pistachios, and a wondrous supply of Turkish cheese, olives and *halva*. 🕘 *1 hr. Open Mon–Sat 9.30am–7pm. Tram or bus to Eminönü.*

7 ★★★ **kids** **Bab-i Hayat.** Opened in 2007 and converted from a warehouse, this gorgeous domed restaurant looks out onto Misir Çarşisi and has a great-value buffet lunch of Turkish traditional dishes, popular with local office workers. *39/47 Misir Çarşisi, Eminönü.* ☎ *0212 520 7878. $.*

⑧ ★★ **Rüstem Paşa Camii (mosque).** Hidden-away above a row of workshops, hardly visible

Watching the fishing off Galata Bridge.

from street level, this mosque really is a hidden gem. Delightfully located at the edge of busy Tahtakale (see *Neighborhood Walks*), its leafy courtyard has potted plants on the balcony. This is one of the best places to see the famous blue Iznik tiles which cover its interior, One of Sinan's smallest creations, it was built in 1560 and originally funded out of proceeds from the nearby shops. The surrounding streets are lovely to explore, filled with workshops making wooden backgammon sets (*tavla*) and simple hammocks. 🕘 *20 min. Hasircilar Cad.* ☎ *0212 526 7350. Open dawn–nightfall.*

⑨ ★★ **Galata Bridge.** There were many failed attempts to build a bridge linking the Ottoman Palace of old Istanbul to the 'new' areas of Pera, Beyoğlu and Galata where merchants and diplomats lived: In the mid 16th century Leonardo da Vinci had his designs rejected, and Michaelangelo turned down the proposal. At last, the early 20th century saw the long-awaited bridge complete, linking Eminönü to Karaköy over the Haliç (Golden Horn). These days it's fishermen, cafés and restaurants on the bridge, over ships sailing the mighty Bosphorus, replacing the wooden bridge which

Sightseeing – the Basics

Most major sights are open Tues–Sun, 9am–5pm, with some staying open later in summer. At the time of writing, there are no discount passes for visitors. Getting around Sultanahmet, focal point to the old city, is best done by tram, or on foot. Most mosques are open to visitors from dawn to nightfall, excluding prayer times; dress modestly, covering arms and legs, and women should cover their hair. You'll soon get used to the street names in Turkish; the basic ones are Sokak (abbreviated to Sok) — road; Caddesi (Cad) — avenue: Meydani — square. You'll be walking along plenty of those to visit mosques (*camii*), museums (*müzesi*) and enclosed markets (*çarşisi*)! For other Turkish words, see p 175).

Sinan, the Master Architect

During your visit you're likely to see the work of one man: master architect of the Ottoman Empire, Mimar Sinan (1489–1588). He was 'adopted' as the Ottoman Palace architect by Süleyman, under whose reign arts and architecture flourished. Under him, Sinan built hundreds of mosques, hamams, bazaars and hospitals throughout Turkey but most famously in Istanbul. Ironically he chose the famous Byzantine Haghia Sophia as inspiration for his mosques, to which he added the slender minarets (and rather ugly buttresses) afterwards.

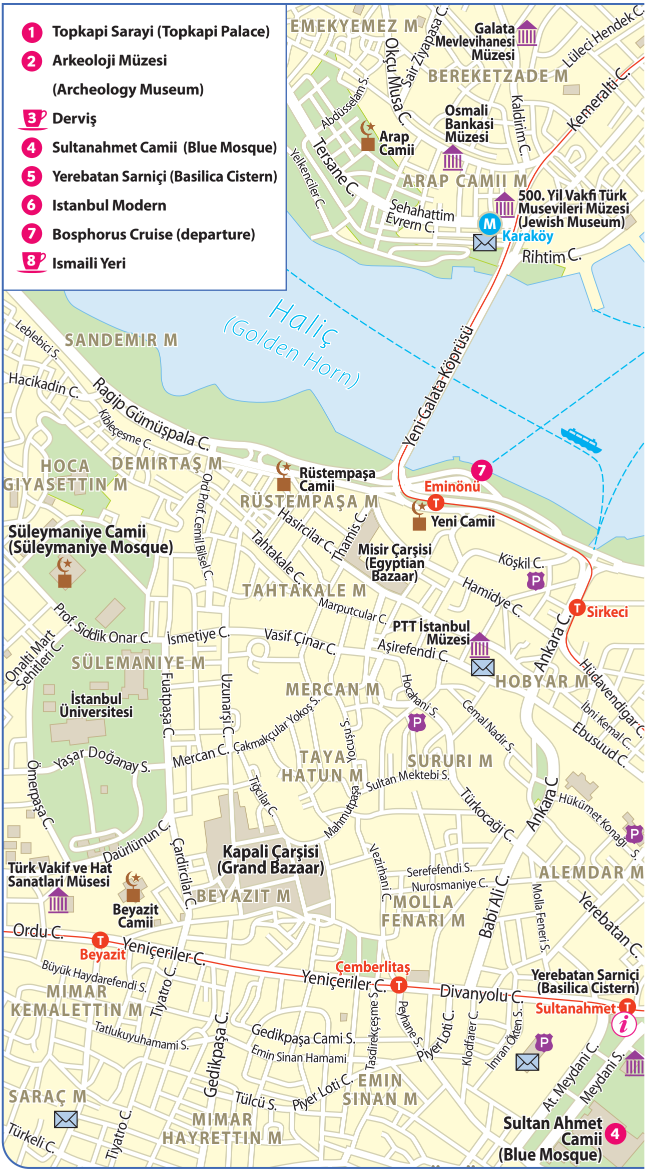
was destroyed by fire in 1992. Today you might be in a café on the bridge playing backgammon (hugely popular here) while enjoying a beer at sunset; but for decades the bridge has been subject of myriad poems and songs. 🕘 *varies. Tram; Eminönü or Karaköy.*

⑩ ★★ **Galata Kulesi (Galata Tower).** I always recommend first-time visitors to ascend the tower (I've done it countless times myself) for the best 360° views of the city, giving you a perspective of its sheer size — although what you see is still only a fraction of mammoth Istanbul. This 62m-high landmark tower, with easily distinguished conical shape,was built by the Genoese in 1348 when they took control of the trade colony Pera. Take the lift to the top and walk around the gallery, looking down on disheveled rooftops, minarets, and the Bosphorus — even the Princes' Islands (see *Day Trips & Excursions* p 150). Time your visit for sunset, if possible. If you don't fancy walking uphill to the tower, take the Tunnel (the old subway) to Tünel and walk down (see *Neighborhood Walks* p 63). 🕘 *1 hr. Buyuk Hendek Sokak, Galata.* ☎ *0212 293 8180. www.galatatower.net. Open daily 9am–8pm. Admission 10 YTL. Tunnel: Tünel; or tram: Karaköy & walk.*

Climb Galata Tower for the best views.

11 ★★★ **kids** **Istiklal Caddesi.** You're close to the dining and entertainment hub of Beyoğlu, so try one of the many good restaurants around this main street, especially those along Asmalimescit or Nevizade Sokak. ***See The Best Dining for details.***

The Best **in Two Days**


1 Topkapi Sarayi (Topkapi Palace)
2 Arkeoloji Müzesi (Archeology Museum)
3 Derviş
4 Sultanahmet Camii (Blue Mosque)
5 Yerebatan Sarniçi (Basilica Cistern)
6 Istanbul Modern
7 Bosphorus Cruise (departure)
8 Ismaili Yeri
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Okçu Musa C.
Şair Ziyapaşa C.
Galata Mevlevihanesi Müzesi
Lüleci Hendek C.
BEREKETZADE M
Kemeraltı C.
Abdüsselam S.
Arap Camii
Osmali Bankasi Müzesi
Kaldirim C.
Tersane C.
Yelkenciler C.
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M
Karaköy
Rihtim C.
Haliç (Golden Horn)
Leblebici S.
SANDEMIR M
Hacikadin C.
Ragip Gümüşpala C.
Kibleçesme C.
Yeni Galata Köprüsü
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Rüstempaşa Camii
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Hasircilar C.
Thamis C.
Tahtakale C.
Süleymaniye Camii (Süleymaniye Mosque)
Misir Çarşisi (Egyptian Bazaar)
Köşkil C.
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Hamidye C.
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Marputcular C.
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İsmetiye C.
Vasif Çinar C.
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Aşirefendi C.
Ankara C.
Onalti Mart Şehitleri C.
SÜLEMANIYE M
HOBYAR M
Hüdavendigar C.
İbni Kemal C.
Ebusuud C.
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Çakmakçılar Yokuş S.
Yoncusu S.
Ömerpaşa C.
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Mercan C.
TAYA HATUN M
SURURI M
Sultan Mektebi S.
Tığcilar C.
Mahmutpaşa
Türkocaği C.
Ankara C.
Hükümet Konaği S.
Daürlünun C.
Çardircilar C.
Kapali Çarşisi (Grand Bazaar)
Vezirhani C.
Serefefendi S.
Nurosmaniye C.
Babi Ali C.
ALEMDAR M
Molla Feneri S.
Yerebatan C.
Türk Vakif ve Hat Sanatlari Müsesi
Beyazit Camii
BEYAZIT M
MOLLA FENARI M
Ordu C.
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Yerebatan Sarniçi (Basilica Cistern)
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Tiyatro C.
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Tatlukuyuhamami S.
Gedikpaşa C.
Gedikpaşa Cami S.
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Tülcü S.
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MIMAR HAYRETTIN M
Türkeli C.
Tiyatro C.
Sultan Ahmet Camii (Blue Mosque)
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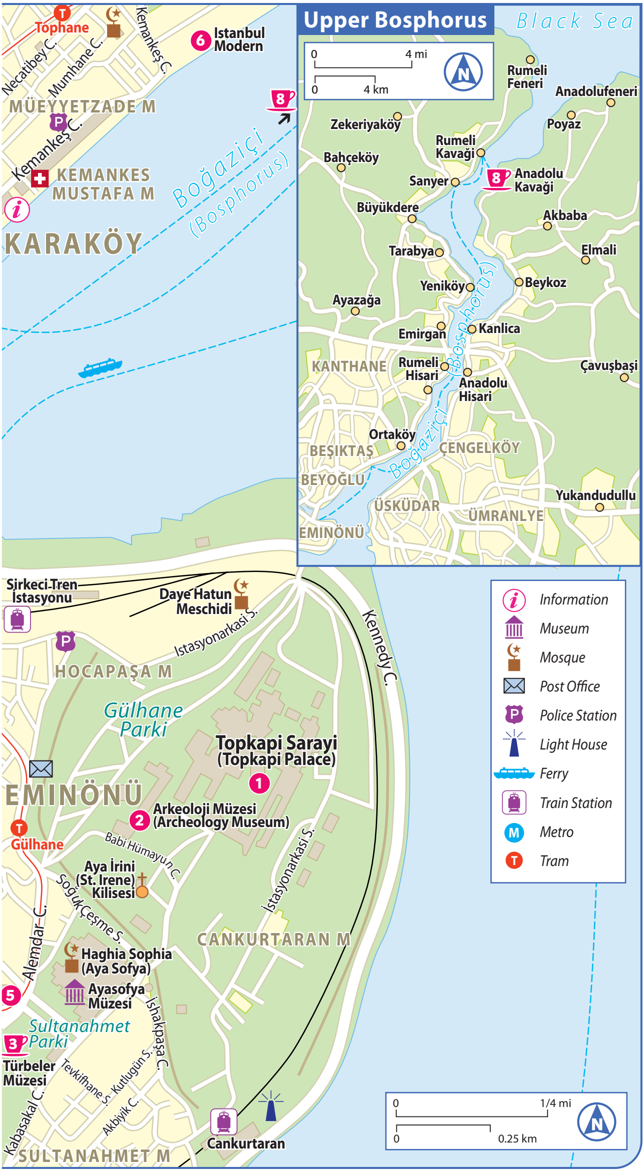
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Topkapi Sarayi (Topkapi Palace)
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Arkeoloji Müzesi (Archeology Museum)
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Aya İrini (St. Irene) Kilisesi
Soğukçeşme S.
Istasyonarkasi S.
Alemdar C.
CANKURTARAN M
Haghia Sophia (Aya Sofya)
Ayasofya Müzesi
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Sultanahmet Parki
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On your second day, dip back into Sultanahmet for more history, including Topkapi Palace, centerpiece of the Ottoman Empire. Contrast its centuries-old opulence with Istanbul Modern's superb collection of contemporary Turkish art, in Karaköy. If you're here for longer, you may prefer to tackle Topkapi Palace and the Archaeology Museum on separate days, because of the vast amount to see in each one. The Bosphorus Cruise operates on summer weekday evenings, although if you're here in winter, enjoy your seafaring journey in the afternoon. **START: Tram to Sultanahmet.**

Historic courtyard of the Archaeology Museum.

① ★★ **Topkapi Sarayi (Topkapi Palace).** Built by Mehmet II in 1478 and center of the Ottoman Empire until 1853, it's no wonder that it's usually a struggle to catch sight of the famous 86-carat **Kasikci Diamond** and **Topkapi Dagger** inside the crowded **Treasury**. Other highlights include the **Harem** (well worth the extra ticket) with its series of tiled chambers and probably the largest mirror I have ever seen. (See *Special Interest Tours* p 26). 🕘 *2–4 hrs. Bab-I Humayun Caddesi, Gulhane.* ☎ *0212 512 0480. www.topkapisarayi.gov.tr. Admission 10 YTL; Harem extra 10 YTL. Open Wed–Mon 9am–5pm. Tram: Gulhane.*

② **kids** ★★★ **Arkeoloji Müzesi (Archaeology Museum).** Many people seem to forget about this astounding museum once they depart Topkapi Palace. The Archaeology Museum, part of the palace's complex, was established by museum curator and artist Orhan Hamdi Bey (1842–1910)—best known for *The Tortoise Trainer* in the Pera Museum (see *Modern Istanbul* p 31) to prevent the classical antiquities from finding their way into European hands. With about one million relics in 20 galleries in three buildings, be selective, especially if you've just emerged from Topkapi Palace. I would suggest sticking to the ground floor of the main building, its neo-classical exterior containing astounding exhibits including the huge Alexander Sarcophagus (4th-century BC) with carved marble scenes of battle. It is well lit, laid-out,

Blue Mosque's distinctive minarets.

and captioned, so enjoy the relative peace of each room to grasp the scale of the mummy of Sidonion King Tabrit (500BC) and significance of the Treaty of Kadesh (1269BC), the world's earliest surviving peace treaty. Cross the courtyard to the **Çinili Köşk (Tiled Pavilion)**, a small Seljuk (dynasty originating from Persia) pavilion with an outstanding collection of Seljuk and Ottoman tiles. Take a breather in the charming courtyard café where you can have tea and ice-cream alongside cats and broken tombstones. 🕘 *1–2 hrs. Osman Hamdi Bey Yokosu, Gulhane.* ☎ *0212 520 7740. Admission 5 YTL. Open Tues–Sun 9am–5pm. Tram: Gulhane.*

The opulent Harem in Topkapi Palace.

3 ★ **kids** **Derviş.** This leafy courtyard is perfect to rest weary feet. Nothing extravagant, just tea, *nargile* (tobacco water-pipe), toast and snacks, and right opposite the Blue Mosque to boot. During the evenings, you might catch the dramatic Sound and Light show on the mosque walls. *1 Kabasakal Sok.* ☎ *0212 516 1515. $$.*

④ ★ **Sultanahmet Camii (Blue Mosque).** Being opposite **Haghia Sophia** is handy for sightseeing, but the mosque's location was intentional, being bigger therefore emphasizing the superiority of Islam over Christian Byzantium. I love the approach to the mosque's courtyard from the Hippodrome (see *Neighborhood Walks* p 74) where the full impact of the cascading domes and six soaring minarets unfold in front of you. The number of slender minarets created consternation at the time, as the only other mosque with six minarets is at Mecca. Built in 1617 by Mehmet Ağa, a student of Sinan, this was the last of the Imperial mosques,

The mysterious Medusa's head at Yerebatan Sarniçi.

commissioned by the 19-year-old Sultan Ahmet I (the mosque is known in Turkish as Sultanahmet Camii). The courtyard, made from Marmara marble, is actually the same size as the interior of the prayer hall and, ironically, more peaceful than the inside. Non-Muslim visitors will be ushered around the side of the courtyard and unfortunately only allowed at the back, which tends to get very crowded. Its most famous feature, the blue Iznik tiles that give its name, cover the upper levels and the domes' interiors — over 20,000 tiles in total — and illuminated by 260 windows. Unfortunately it's difficult to see the tiles' detail, and also the carved white *minbar* (pulpit) and *mihrab* (niche pointing to Mecca) at the front. During the summer, wonderful **Sound and Light** shows on the mosque's walls play from 9pm in various languages, great for kids. ⏱ *30 min. Sultanahmet Meydani. Open 9am–7pm daily, except during prayers. Tram: Sultanahmet.*

⑤ **kids** ★★ **Yerebatan Sarniçi (Basilica Cistern).** A great feat of Byzantine engineering, this is one of the city's most unusual and memorable sights, dating back to the 6th century (see *Byzantine Beauties,* p 49). Back then, water came from the Belgrade Forest, some 19km away, through the 4th-century **Valens** (see p 48) and later the 16th-century Mağlova aqueducts. The red spotlights' eerie glow is best experienced when the place is as empty as possible — try early morning or late afternoon. Make your way to the north-west corner for the two Medusa head columns, thought to be late Roman, one upside down and one tilted 45 degrees. And the reason? No one really knows, except possibly to create even more intrigue surrounding

The Istanbul Modern.

the legendary woman who transformed into stone people who looked at her. No such grizzly results these days, as people throw coins into the carp-filled pool and make a wish. Scenes from James Bond's 1963 *From Russia With Love* were filmed here. 🕒 *45 min. 13 Yerebatan Caddesi, Sultanahmet.* ☎ *0212 522 1259. www.yerebatan.com. Open daily 9.30am–6.30pm (Oct–Apr 9.30am–5.30pm). Tram: Sultanahmet.*

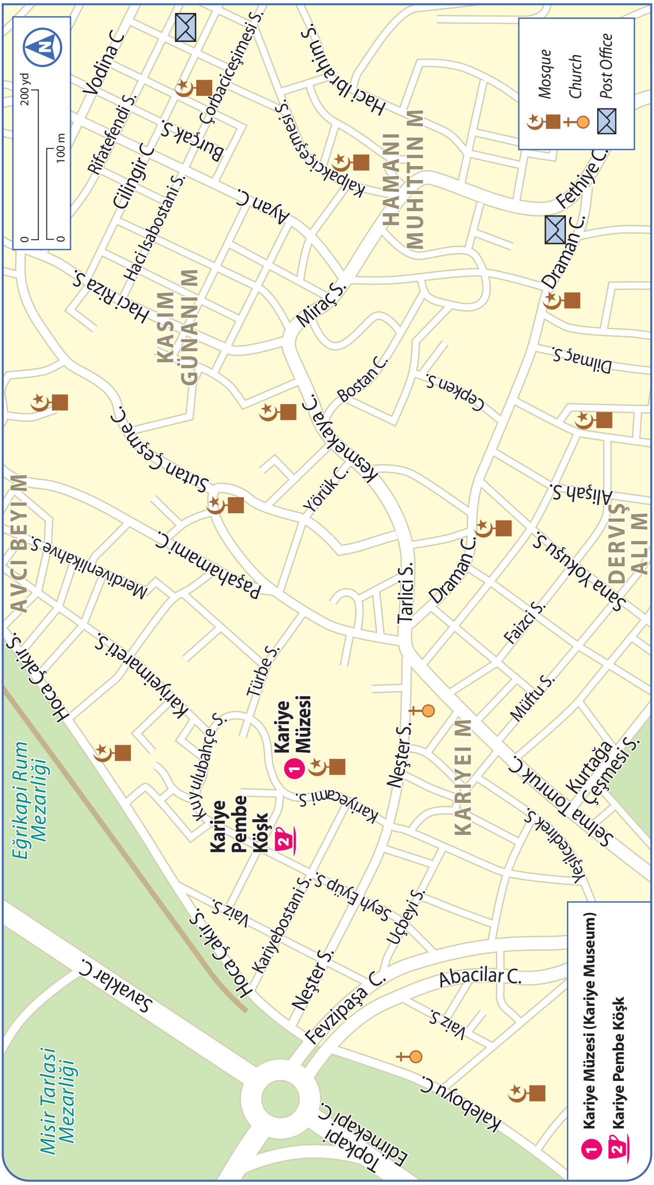
⑥ **kids** ★★★ **Istanbul Modern.** When you take the tram whizzing over the Golden Horn to Tophane, near Karaköy, you leave behind centuries of history. Enter Istanbul Modern, opened in 2004, and you'll find one of the country's finest art collections, from 20th-century Ottoman art to today. The ex-customs office (it still looks like a warehouse from the outside) has a sublime waterfront location so as you muse the galleries of 20th- and 21st-century Turkish art, like the gauze installation of Irfan Önürmen (b 1958) and bold oils of Mehmet Guleryuz (b 1938), you can take a seat and gaze out to the Bosphorus. (See *Modern Istanbul* p 28) 🕒 *90 min. Mecles-I Mebusan Caddesi, Liman Işletmeleri, 4 Sahasi Antrepo, Karakoy.* ☎ *0212 334 7300. www.istanbulmodern.org. Admission 7 YTL; conc 3 YTL; Thurs free. Tue–Sun 10am–6pm; Thurs 10am–8pm. Tram: Tophane.*

⑦ **kids** ★★★ **Bosphorus Cruise.** One of Istanbul's most popular trips, locals and visitors alike love a cruise on the city's famous waterway, strategically important for centuries (see *A Brief History* p 170). Trips begin at Eminönü and stops include Beşiktaş and Ortaköy (see *Best In Three Days* p 21) on the European side, Çengelköy on the Asian side before terminating at **Anadolu Kavaği** over in Asia. During summer months, weekday trips leave at 7.15pm from Eminönü and make a wonderful evening, with just enough time for the steep climb to the 14th-century Genoese **Yoros Castle** for incredible views of the Bosphorus meeting the Black Sea, then dinner on the pier before returning on the ferry. If you're traveling during winter months, I highly recommend taking this trip one sunny afternoon, perhaps moving one of the museums to the following day. If you want to spend more time at the castle (it's less than a two-hour turnaround), then take the ferry from Anadolu Kavagi to **Sariyer** on the opposite side, and a fast bus back to Beşiktaş a few miles west, giving more time to enjoy the castle and its spectacular views. 🕒 *varies. Check www.ido.com.tr. for times and prices. Ferries from Eminönü pier; Tram: Eminönü.*

Savor the views from Anadolu Kavaği.

8 ★ **kids** **Ismaili Yeri.** At the ferry pier, waiters from a plethora of mid-range fish restaurants try to tempt you in. If you don't want a full dinner, this small stall near the waterfront has fabulous *balik ekmek* (fish sandwich), perfect if you want to eat while you walk. *6 Anadolu Kavaği.* ☎ *0216 320 2112. $.*

The Best **in Three Days**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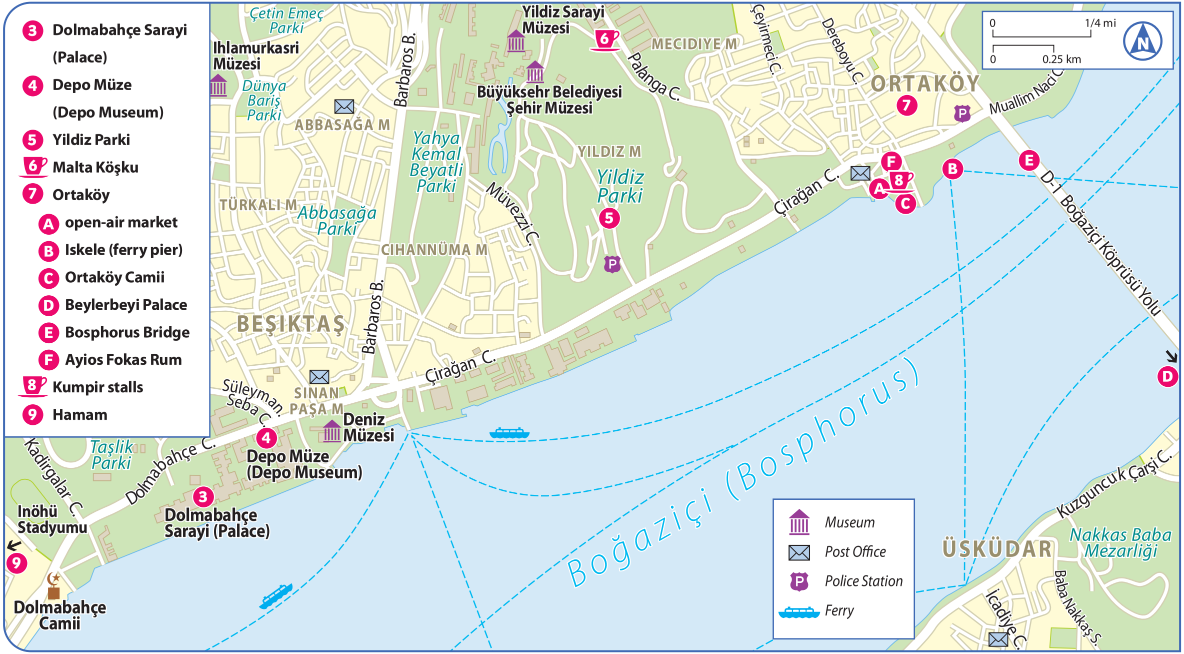
Hoca Çakir S.
Kariyeimareti S.
Türbe S.
Müftu S.
Kariye Müzesi
Neşter S.
Kuyulubahçe S.
KARIYEI M
Selma Tomruk C.
Kurtağa Çeşmesi S.
Eğrikapi Rum Mezarliği
Kariye Pembe Köşk
Kariyecami S.
Yeşilcedirek S.
Seyh Eyüp S.
Vaiz S.
Hoca Çakir S.
Kariyebostani S.
Uçbeyi S.
Savaklar C.
Neşter S.
Fevzipaşa C.
Abacilar C.
Vaiz S.
Misir Tarlasi Mezarliği
Kaleboyu C.
Topkapi Edirnekapi C.
1 Kariye Müzesi (Kariye Museum)
2 Kariye Pembe Köşk



- ③ Dolmabahçe Sarayi (Palace)
- ④ Depo Müze (Depo Museum)
- ⑤ Yildiz Parki
- 6 Malta Köşku
- ⑦ Ortaköy
  - Ⓐ open-air market
  - Ⓑ Iskele (ferry pier)
  - Ⓒ Ortaköy Camii
  - Ⓓ Beylerbeyi Palace
  - Ⓔ Bosphorus Bridge
  - Ⓕ Ayios Fokas Rum
- 8 Kumpir stalls
- ⑨ Hamam

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Yildiz Sarayi Müzesi
Ihlamurkasri Müzesi
Büyükşehr Belediyesi Şehir Müzesi
Çetin Emeç Parki
Dünya Bariş Parki
Yahya Kemal Beyatli Parki
Yildiz Parki
Abbasağa Parki
Taşlik Parki
Deniz Müzesi
Depo Müze (Depo Museum)
Dolmabahçe Sarayi (Palace)
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Dolmabahçe Camii
Nakkas Baba Mezarliği
Barbaros B.
Palanga C.
Çeyirmeci C.
Dereboyu C.
Muallim Naci C.
Müvezzi C.
Çirağan C.
Süleyman Seba C.
Dolmabahçe C.
Kadirgalar C.
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It's time to experience Istanbul's finest Byzantine art, then indulge in more Ottoman affluence at Dolmabahçe Palace. Need some exercise? You can walk from the palace to Yildiz Park and then to Ortaköy, a charming waterfront area with plenty of options for eating and drinking, avoiding crowded buses and traffic jams — even worse at weekends when it seems the whole of Istanbul descends on the area. **START:** **Bus to Edirnekapi.**

① ★★★ **Kariye Müzesi (Kariye Museum).** Built in the 11th century as the Chora Church, typically Byzantine in appearance (see *Special Interest* p 48), the interior frescoes and mosaics added in the mid-1300s are considered some of the world's finest surviving Byzantine art. They were plastered over when the church was converted to a mosque in 1511 (representation of the human form is forbidden in Islam); this ironically helped to preserve them. Restored and now a museum, gaze at the golden mosaics in the vaults of inner and outer narthexes, illustrating scenes from the life of Christ and the Virgin Mary. Above the entrance to the nave, the figure of Theodore Metochites (1270–1332) represents a more worldly character, the theologian and philosopher who facilitated the church's redecoration, 'presenting' the church to Christ. Strictly no flash photography. 🕘 *90 min. Kariye Camii Sokak, Edirnekapi.* ☎ *0212 631 9241. Admission 10 YTL. Thurs–Tues 9am–4.30pm (last ticket sold); summer months may close later, phone to check. Bus 86 from Eminönü or 87 from Taksim, then 5 min walk.*

2 **kids** **Kariye Pembe Köşk.** A prize venue opposite the museum; rest weary feet in a peaceful courtyard with tea, toasted sandwiches or hot lentil soup. *27 Kariye Camii Sokak, Edirnekapi.* ☎ *0212 635 8586. $.*

③ **kids** ★★ **Dolmabahçe Sarayi (Palace).** After the lavish Topkapi Palace, the Ottoman Empire ended its days here after decline (see *A Brief History* p 170); an eclectic collection of mid 19th-century baroque and rococo styles, creating a highly ornate appearance. At the centre is the **Selamlik**, home to the head of the house, with ostentatious marble exterior and a main entrance hall with superb gilded ceiling. The Sultan only received foreign visitors from the 19th century onwards, when the declining Empire depended on European trade. Hence the Ambassadorial Reception hall was created, housing one of the world's largest chandeliers — weighing in at four tons, a gift from Queen Victoria. Tours of the **Harem** — the private,

Ottoman Mehter music at Dolmabahçe Palace.

women's quarters, far less ornate — and Selamlik are only by guided tour, or alternatively you can just explore the grounds and the **Saat Müzesi** (Clock Museum), especially the fabulous 19th-century astrological clocks displaying everything from the River Nile's level to wind direction. You don't need a ticket to see the **Mehter band** (see *Istanbul for Kids* p 44) at 11am every Tuesday by the **Imperial Gate,** well worth a viewing. 🕘 *2 hrs. Dolmabahçe Caddesi, Beşiktaş.* ☎ *0212 236 9000. www.dolmabahce.gov.tr. Tour of Selamlik 15 YTL; Selamlik & Harem 25 YTL; Saat Muzesi 2 YTL. Open 9am–4pm; closed Mon and Thurs. Bus to Taksim then 15-min walk, or tram to Kabatas.*

④ ★★ **Depo Müze (Depo Museum).** Opened in 2005, over 40,000 pieces salvaged from Dolmabahçe Palace are on show in the old palace kitchen. Few visitors make it here, so staff will happily point out highlights like the Sultan's monograms on ornate glass flasks, glorious 4m-high cabinets with gold leaf, and a silver chocolate box. I especially love the early washing machine, document shredder, and central heating from 1912. Looking at the primitive dentist's chair, I'm glad I never had to visit a palace dentist, but the battery-operated massage chair looks inviting. 🕘 *1 hr. Dolmabahçe Caddesi, Beşiktaş.* ☎ *0212 227 6671. www.millisaraylar.gov.tr. Admission 2 YTL. Tues–Sun 9am–5pm. Bus: Beşiktaş.*

⑤ **kids** ★ **Yildiz Parki.** Here's where the Sultans once strolled and hunted while living at Çirağan Palace (since burnt down and now a deluxe hotel), filled at weekends with local families. Enjoy dappled walks during peaceful weekdays — and don't be alarmed if you see young courting couples emerge from the bushes. Take the steep road from the main entrance to **Yildiz Porcelain Factory and Museum** (Mon–Fri 9am–12.30 and 1.30–5.30pm; 1 YTL), built by Abdulhamid II in 1896 to produce porcelain to rival Iznik's. Today, artists painstakingly hand-paint plates, vases and delicate cups, recreated from original palace ceramics (one of the artists might show you around.) Check out the 19th-century **Malta Köşku** (see below), combining neo-classical, Islamic and Ottoman styles, rococo arches and baroque oval windows, where it's even possible to poke around upstairs. Such details probably went unnoticed by Murat V (1840–1904) deposed and imprisoned here by his brother Abdulhamit II for 27 years. **Çadir Köşk,** near the entrance, has a charming duck pond and café. 🕘 *1–2 hrs.Yildiz Park. Ciragan Caddesi, Besiktas.* ☎ *0212 261 8460. Open daily dawn-dusk.*

Once real deer were hunted at Yildiz Parki.

6 **Malta Köşku.** Probably as close as you can get to a Sultan's lifestyle. The chalet has a terrace commanding great Bosphorus views, and a lovely café with Turkish dishes, hot and cold. *Yildiz Korusu, Besiktas.* ☎ *0212 444 6644. $.*

⑦ **kids** ★★★ **Ortaköy.** Once a quaint fishing village, today's Ortaköy is an affluent, waterfront

Ortaköy Camii, picturesque neo-baroque mosque.

neighborhood, hugely popular at weekends. On Sundays, shop at the Ⓐ **open-air market** (see *Shopping*, p 95) for hats, hand-made jewelry and old books. From the Ⓑ **Iskele (ferry pier)**, boats ply the Bosphorus and it's a popular stopping-off point. You'll be getting your camera out for tiny Ⓒ **Ortaköy Camii** (mosque; open dawn till nightfall) perched on a promontory over the Bosphorus. Staff here might give a quick tour of the mosque, built in 1853 for Sultan Abdülmescit in neo-baroque style, and if they lead you upstairs, you can see restoration to the frescoes, plus a superb view over the Bosphorus to Ⓓ **Beylerbeyi Palace** (see *Neighborhood Walks Üsküdar* p 66). At night, the lights on the mighty Ⓔ **Bosphorus Bridge** change color, graceful without being kitsch. Look out for Ⓕ **Ayios Fokas Rum's** beautiful bell tower (16 Muallim Haci Cad) a Greek Orthodox church previously central to the area's once-large Greek community (rarely open outside Sunday services). 🕓 *varies. Bus to Ortaköy.*

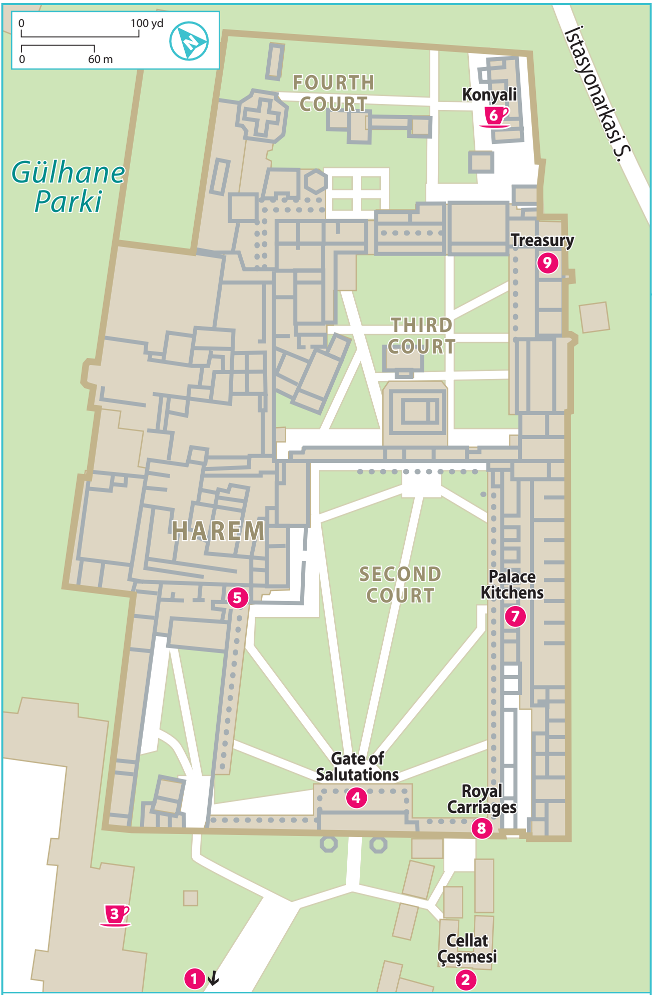
8 **kids** ★★ **Kumpir stalls.** If you decide not to dine at Ortaköy's trendy restaurants, come here for baked potatoes (*kumpir*) filled with salads, dips and rainbow-hued sauces. Then eat on a waterfront wall while watching the boats go by. Bliss. *Mecidiye Koprusu Sokak, Ortaköy. $.*

⑨ ★★ **Hamam.** You might choose to substitute Ortaköy for a good soak and scrub in a *hamam* (Turkish bath). With many neighborhood baths, **Çemberlitaş Hamam** is the most historic (and foreigner-friendly). Built in 1584 by Sinan, the huge marble slab and domes of the *sicaklik* (hot room) are unchanged, as are the attendants' energetic scrubs and massages. Men and women bathe separately, but the new rooftop café is ideal for enjoying your ultra-clean, tingly skin. Visitors are provided with wooden shoes, soap, body scrub and a wrap. Treatments range from 'self-service' basic bath, to the luxurious soap and oil massage. 🕓 *1–2 hrs. 8 Vezirhan Cad.* ☎ *0212 522 7974. www.cemberlitashamami.com.tr. Open daily 6am–12am. Basic €15; traditional scrub and massage €23; luxury inc oil massage €40. Tram: Çemberlitaş.* ●

2

The Best Special-Interest Tours

Topkapi **Palace**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Gate of Salutations
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Royal Carriages
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Cellat Çeşmesi
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1. Haghia Eirene
2. Cellat Çeşmesi (Fountain of the Executioner)
3. Café
4. Bab-us Selam (Gate of Salutations)
5. Harem
6. Konyali
7. Palace Kitchens
8. Royal Carriages
9. Treasury

Probably Istanbul's most famous attraction, this huge palace complex was built by Mehmet II in 1478 at Sarayburnu, a strategic point overlooking the Bosphorus. Central to the Ottoman Sultans for almost 400 years, it housed several thousand people, a city within a city. The stone pavilions echoed tents of nomadic Ottomans, containing the residence, offices, seat of government and solders' training ground. In turn, new sultans made their own additions to the palace. Below are some of my highlights from the vast collections, and with grounds covering over 80,000m^2 of courtyards, kiosks and exhibitions, count on several hours for a visit. Peruse the first courtyard's attractions before entering the main entrance.

START: Tram to Sultanahmet.

① ★★ **Haghia Eirene.** In the first courtyard, this 6th-century Byzantine church was never converted into a mosque—although used as a weapons arsenal in Ottoman times – and presumably part of the same complex as Haghia Sophia. Unfortunately you're only likely to see the inside during rare concerts during the Istanbul Music Festival in summer, during which performers use the original five rows of built-in seats hugging the apse, above which is an 8th-century black mosaic cross on the wall. 🕘 *10 min.*

② ★ **kids** **Cellat Çeşmesi (Fountain of the Executioner).** It looks like a disused water-fountain, but this is where, back in the 16th century, the executioner would clean his sword and hands after a public execution, before re-entering the palace. 🕘 *10 mins.*

3 **kids** ★★ **Café.** Stock up on bottled water or refresh yourself before your palace visit on the relaxing terrace, with a choc-ice and coffee—at a fraction of the cost of snacks inside the palace grounds. *$.*

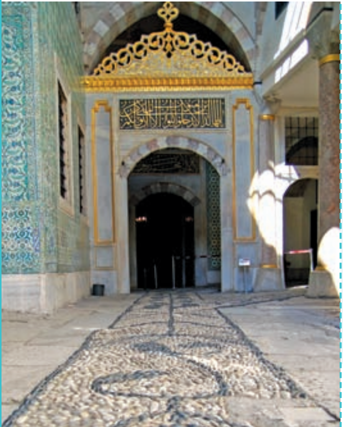
④ ★ **kids** **Bab-us Selam (Gate of Salutations).** With distinctive twin conical towers, this leads to the second courtyard, where all visitors had to dismount, as only the sultan could ride through on horseback. It was also known as *kapi araliği*, where high officials

Bab-us Selam, where traitors were strangled.

who had displeased the Sultan were arrested and choked to death. On a more cheery note, before you take your bags through the X-ray machines to the second courtyard, look up at the superbly ornate gold-painted ceiling. 🕘 *10 min.*

⑤ kids ★★★ **Harem.** A highlight of any palace visit (see below, *Life of a Concubine*) and worth the extra ticket, only a fraction of the Harem's rooms are open to the public. Your journey into the 'forbidden' quarter, in the third courtyard, begins at the colonnaded **Corridor of Concubines** with black-and-white patterned cobbles lined with marble counters where plates of food were laid out. You'll gasp at the opulence of the **Imperial Hall**, complete with crystal chandelier and Sultan's sofa, where he entertained his best buddies. The Sultan's **apartments** and marble **hamam**, enclosed behind a golden door – allegedly for his own safety – contrast sharply with the more modest living quarters of the concubines and eunuchs. But the prize woman, the **Valide Sultan** (Sultan's mum) enjoyed five-star living quarters, where her devoted son visited her every morning. 🕘 *45 mins.*

The cobbled Courtyard of the Concubines.



6 kids **Konyali.** The palace's only restaurant is pricey, although the traditional Turkish dishes are good. The adjacent courtyard's café is slightly cheaper with the same superb Bosphorus view. ☎ *0212 513 9696. $$.*

It's a Concubine's Life

Although 'harem' might conjure up images of Oriental debauchery, it literally means 'forbidden', referring to the private quarters for the palace's women. Life in this 300-room complex was no picnic; girls and young women were brought from all corners of the Ottoman Empire, living a mundane existence, working as servants, sleeping in dormitories and learning the ways of the palace. The only other people allowed in the harem were the sultan and his sons, plus hundreds of eunuch slaves (castrated boys), many from Ethiopia and Sudan, to guard the women. Favored girls were 'trained' as wives or concubines for the sultans by the Valide Sultan (the sultan's mother, who really ruled the roost) and, ideally, bearing them sons. The harem's history (some of it apocryphal) is littered with tales of dastardly power games, drowning and poisoning galore, involving a cast of thousands.

⑦ ★★ **kids** **Palace Kitchens.** In contrast to the lavish Treasury or the Throne Room, this is one of my favorites. Heard the phrase 'An army marches on its stomach'? Every soldier, and in this case sultan, needed feeding, so this was the working room of the palace, where food was prepared by a few hundred staff (12 just to prepare food for the sultan) to feed about 5,000 people each day. The domed stone ceilings are wonderful, as are the display cabinets of silverware and crystal, with plates of Chinese celadon favored by the sultans because, allegedly, it changed color when in contact with poison. Paranoid, them? 🕘 *20 min.*

⑧ ★ **kids** **Royal Carriages.** Slightly more glamorous than today's buses, peer behind the glass window to see 19th-century state carriages for Abdulaziz (1830–1876), made in Vienna. Close by is a scaled-down model of the entire palace and its surrounds, which might help in your navigation. 🕘 *15 min.*

⑨ ★★ **Treasury.** Most visitors queue for a glimpse of the famous **Topkapi Dagger** from 1741, (made even more famous thanks to the 1964 film *Topkapi*) encrusted with diamonds and huge emeralds. Made for the Shah of Persia, in appreciation of his gift of the **Nadir Shah throne** in the fourth hall, he was assassinated before he had chance to receive it so, you guessed it, Mahmud I (1696–1754) kept it for himself. If the eye-popping emeralds aren't enough, take a look at the 84-carat **Spoonmaker's Diamond**; the background to its name is a little hazy, but it may have been found by a scrap merchant who was given three spoons in return. You'll also see jeweled **golden candlesticks**, sent as a gift to the tomb of Mohammed, but returned to Constantinople after the evacuation of Medina in World War I. 🕘 *30 min*.

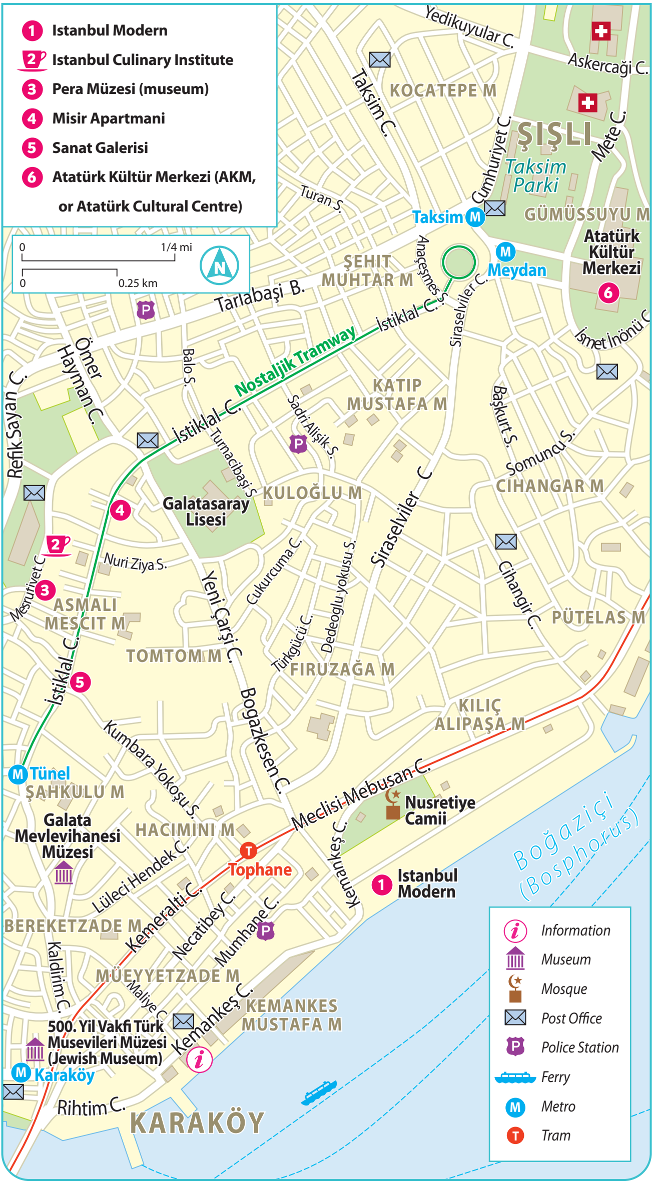
The Royal Kitchens.

Topkapi Palace: Practical Matters

Babihumayun Caddesi. ☎ 0212 512 0480. www.topkapisarayi.gov.tr. Tram: Sultanahmet. Wed–Sun 9am–5pm (winter); 9am–7pm (summer); tickets 10 YTL. Perennially busy, especially in summer and at weekends, beat the crowds by getting there at opening time or, in summer, late afternoons. Buy separate tickets for the **Harem 10 YTL** near its entrance (9am–4pm year-round), and separate **audio guides** for the palace and harem in many languages. Tip: If you're getting a taxi to the palace, ask the driver for "Topkapi Sarayi". If you just say "Topkapi", unscrupulous drivers might take you to the unrelated area of Topkapi!

Modern **Istanbul**

1. Istanbul Modern
2. Istanbul Culinary Institute
3. Pera Müzesi (museum)
4. Misir Apartmani
5. Sanat Galerisi
6. Atatürk Kültür Merkezi (AKM, or Atatürk Cultural Centre)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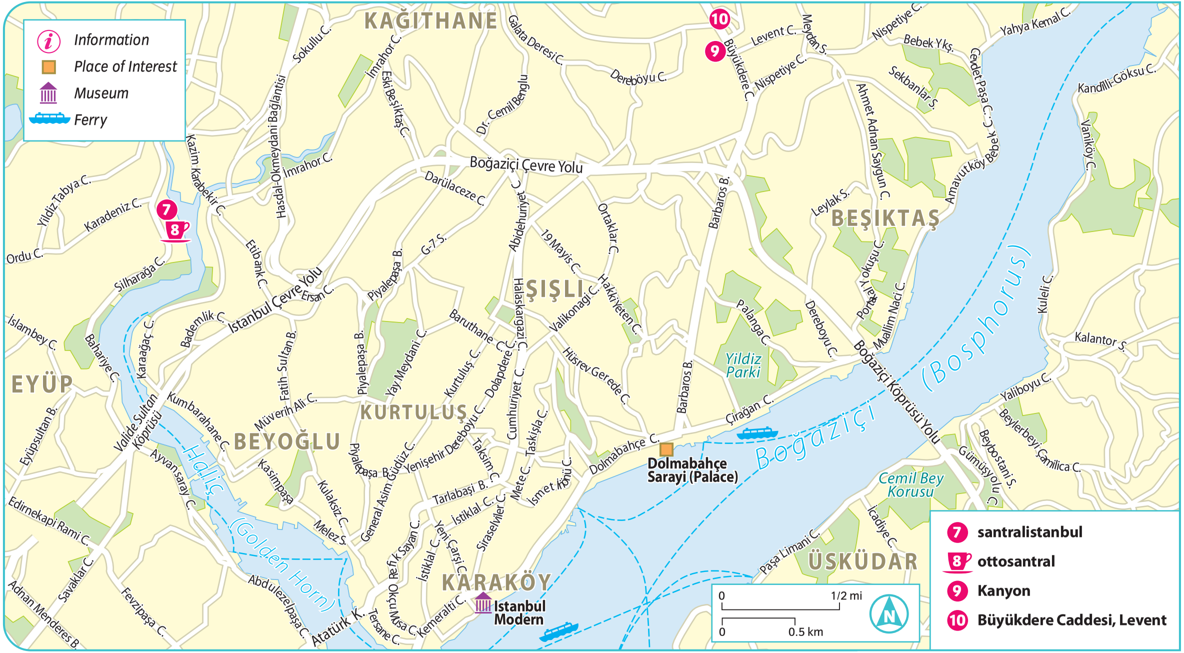
Modern **Istanbul**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(Bosphorus)
Haliç
(Golden Horn)
Dolmabahçe Sarayi (Palace)
Istanbul Modern
Yildiz Parki
Cemil Bey Korusu
Boğaziçi Çevre Yolu
Boğaziçi Köprüsü Yolu
Istanbul Çevre Yolu
Valide Sultan Köprüsü
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Eski Beşiktaş C.
Galata Deresi C.
Dereboyu C.
Dr. Cemil Benglu
Büyükdere C.
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Amavutköy Bebek C.
Kandilli-Göksu C.
Vaniköy C.
Kuleli C.
Kalantor S.
Yaliboyu C.
Beylerbeyi Çamlica C.
Beybostani S.
Gümüşyolu C.
İcadiye C.
Paşa Limani C.
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Muallim Naci C.
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Karadeniz C.
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Ordu C.
Silharağa C.
Karaağaç C.
Bahariye C.
İslambey C.
Eyüpsultan B.
Ayvansaray C.
Edirnekapi Rami C.
Savaklar C.
Adnan Menderes B.
Fevzipaşa C.

Leave the Ottoman era behind to head to today. Like most visitors you'll be drawn to the history, but don't ignore the modern face of Istanbul, with new galleries showcasing local artists, cutting-edge architecture, and a dynamic fashion scene. All the galleries below have opened since 2004, which makes you realize the lack of contemporary arts spaces before that—surprising for a city with such a cultural hub. It's certainly been one of the most exciting developments to Istanbul, giving it a certain cachet.

START: Tram: Tophane.

① ★★★ **Istanbul Modern.** When this contemporary art museum opened in 2004 (see p 17) in a converted customs warehouse, it was a much-needed fillip to Istanbul's art scene. The permanent exhibition 'Modern Experiences' highlights prominent 19th-century Turkish painters. Look out for Ihsan Cemal Karaburçak (1897–1970), influenced by Cezanne, Gaugin and Matisse from his trips to Paris, and the huge work by Nejad Melih Devrim (1923–1995), one of Turkey's earliest abstract painters. It's also interesting to see how the first professional artists operated under the new Turkish Republic from 1923, having been trained and financed under the Ottomans, like Osman Hamdi Bey, famed for his Orientalist style. From the cracked glass walls lined with chains, descend to the basement, where the false ceiling comprising suspended books is dramatic. I love the temporary photographic exhibitions in the basement (although the images of Istanbul through the decades from the Magnum group is hard to beat). The shop has an eclectic collection of prints, mugs, and even kits to paint reproductions of paintings on T-shirts. There's also a kids section on the first floor with soft play materials. 🕘 *90 min. (see p 17 for details).*

2 ★★ **kids** **Istanbul Culinary Institute.** This informal student-run restaurant presents Ottoman cuisine with a contemporary twist. Breakfasts are enhanced by superb homemade bread, with a daily-changing lunch menu, perhaps including pan-fried zucchini pancakes. Good value; daytime only. *59 Meşrutiyet Cad.* ☎ *0212 251 2525. $$.*

Turkey's first modern art gallery, Istanbul Modern.

ISTANBUL MODERN

③ ★★ **Pera Müzesi (museum).** Opened in 2005 in a restored late 19th-century Pera building, this museum houses the private collection of the Suna and Inan Kiraç Foundation. In addition to the permanent collections of all things ceramic, Orientalist and Ottoman, head to the top three floors for changing exhibitions. Often these are by prestigious European painters, for example I recently enjoyed the Joan Miró exhibition, with two floors (albeit small) of the Spaniard's paintings and sculptures, beautifully lit, laid-out and labeled. There may also be a floor dedicated to contemporary Turkish artists and experimental art. While you're there, don't miss Osman Hamdi Bey's serene *Tortoise Trainer* (1906) Turkey's most valuable painting at $3.5m, depicting himself as a dervish 'training' the tortoises with music. 🕒 *1 hr. 65 Meşrutiyet Caddesi, Tepebaşi.* ☎ *0212 334 9900. www.pm.org.tr. Admission 7 YTL; concession 3 YTL. Tues–Sat 10am–7pm; Sun 12–6pm. Tram: Tünel or Taksim.*

④ ★★ **Misir Apartmani.** When the top floor of this early 20th-century building opened **360 Istanbul** (see *Best Nightlife* p *123*) in 2004, the rooftop bar, restaurant and fashionistas gathering *par excellence*, it paved the way for a series of contemporary art galleries. Get the lift to the top, then work your way down and keep your eyes open for even more opening up. Most of the work exhibited is for sale. The private **Galeri Nev** (5/F; ☎ 0212 252 1525; www.galerinevistanbul.com) represents 13 Turkish artists, including Nazif Topçuoğlu's photographs and large installations by Canan Tolon. Exhibitions, changing every few months, usually show a couple of pieces from each, including sculptures. With two changing exhibitions by contemporary European artists or photographers, **Galerist**. (4/F; ☎ 0212 244 8230; www.galerist.com.tr) has brochures in English. Sneak onto the balcony for wonderful views over busy Istiklal Caddesi. Opened in May 2007, **Casa Dell'Art** (3/F; ☎ 0212 251 1214; www.casadell artgallery.com) represents 15 young established Turkish artists, hoping to promote them overseas. Each month sees a solo exhibition of two, perhaps Ergin Inan's mixed media, or Mustafa Sekban's realistic Istanbul scenes. One of the building's oldest galleries, **Fototrek Fotograf Merkezi** (1/F; ☎ 0212 251 9014; www.fototrek.com) houses photographic exhibitions. Usually contemporary Turkish and European photographers, you might catch the occasional exhibition from members of the Magnum photojournalist agency. 🕒 *1 hr. 163 Istiklal Cad.*

The Pera Museum.

⑤ ★ **Sanat Galerisi.** Here's a chance to get an idea of future plans to 'smarten up' in time for 2010, when Istanbul will be European City of Culture. In a Belediye (council) gallery, display boards and photographs showcase proposed

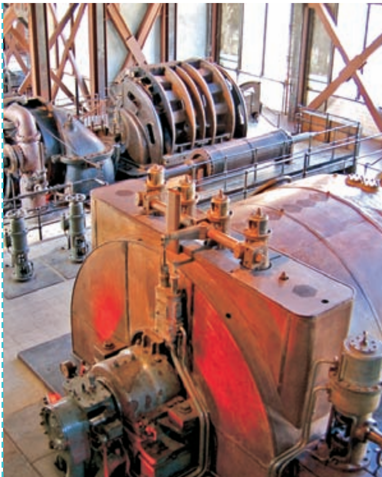
Lunch inside the restored power station at ottosantral.

designs to regenerate Tarlibaşi, a downtrodden area of Beyoğlu which still makes made middle-class Istanbullus shudder. Photographs of 'before' (the 'narrow alleys and ramshackle houses') contrast sharply with computer-generated pastel-hued apartments, where a businessman talking on his mobile phone is supposed to illustrate that in 'new Tarlibasi', people can talk on mobiles without the fear of being mugged. It begs the question – what will happen to the original residents? 🕘 *20 min. 217 Istiklal Caddesi. Admission free. Open daily 9am–4.30pm. Tram: Tünel.*

⑥ **Atatürk Kültür Merkezi (AKM, or Atatürk Cultural Centre).** While awaiting your shuttle bus to **santralistanbul** (see bullet ⑦), take a look at the iconic cultural center in Taksim Meydani (see Istiklal *Neighborhood Walks*, p 52). Hardly contemporary any more, this was considered cutting-edge architecture when converted from the 1930s opera house in 1969 by Hayati Tabanlioğlu, then renamed Istanbul Cultural Palace. It burnt down during a performance just one year later, and reopened in 1978 as the AKM. Some love the grey steel box-like exterior, others hate it, but with the plethora of music, dance and theatre performances, maybe its external appearance doesn't really matter. (Due to reopen after renovations in early 2009.) 🕘 *10 min. See p 132 for details.*

⑦ **kids** ★★★ **santralistanbul.** One of my favorite places in Istanbul, period. This astounding new art space, opened in September 2007, transformed the Silahtarağa Power Plant, which provided electricity to the city from 1911 to 1983. Many of the original structures had to be knocked down but were rebuilt with the same dimensions, giving amazing scope and scale for large-scale art, sculptures and installations. The themed exhibition changes a couple of times a year, mainly of Turkish contemporary artists. Few people, even locals, have even heard of this ambitious place, but I've been telling everyone I know. Wonderful! 🕘 *90 min. See p 42 for details.*

Some of the original machinery on show at santralistanbul.



A surprising night view on Levent's Büyükdere Caddesi.

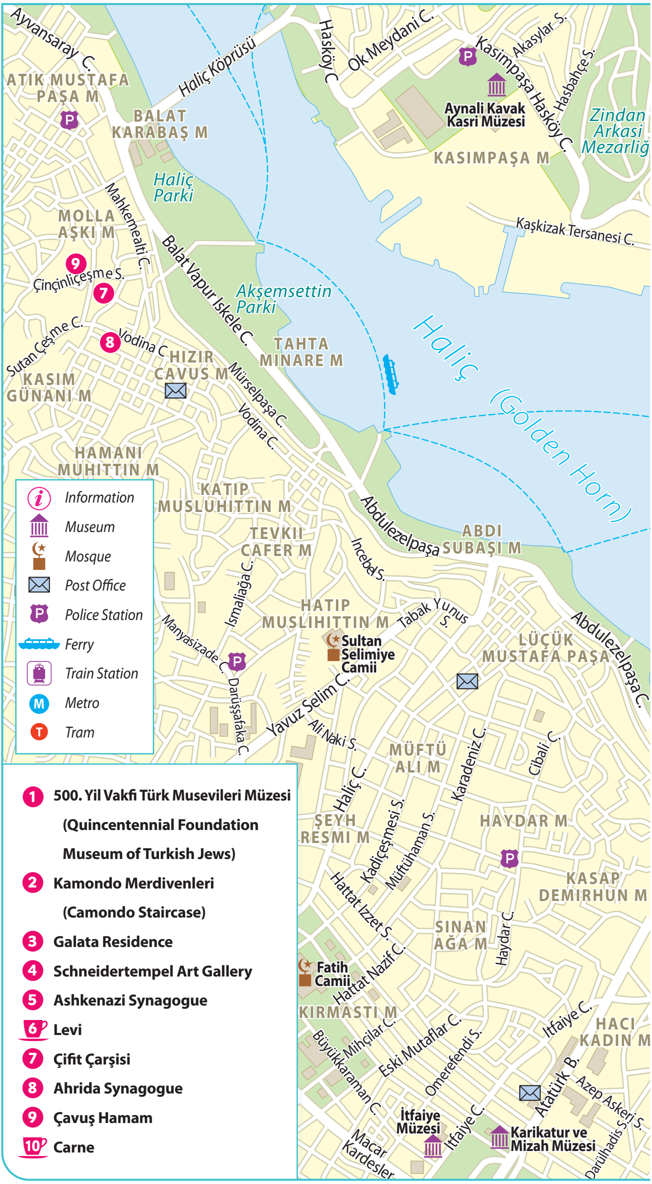
8 ★★ **ottosantral.** In the grounds of the gallery, this is rather like an industrial warehouse turned funky, with exposed pipes and menu of fresh salads, Thai chicken and original pizzas. Creative décor by day, buzzing DJ-bar by night. ☎ *0212 427 1889. $$.*

⑨ ★ **Kanyon.** Yes it's a shopping mall, but even if you have no intention of trailing around its up-market stores laced with designer brands (see p 96), take time to admire this wonderful piece of architecture. A metro journey from Taksim Meydani, the mall was designed by the Jerde Partnership (designers of several Las Vegas hotels) and opened in early 2006, its mix of residential, office, retail and entertainment has certainly been a big hit amongst Istanbullus, who flock to the softly curvaceous mall. Its multiplex movie halls and restaurants for a day out. With clever use of well-designed courtyard and terraces, visitors are not exposed to the elements (sun or rain) yet it never seems enclosed. Creative lighting at night brings it alive. 🕒 *30–60 mins. 185 Büyükdere Caddesi, Levent.* ☎ *0212 353 5300. www.kanyon.com.tr. Most stores 10am–9pm; restaurants later. Metro: Levent.*

⑩ ★ **Büyükdere Caddesi, Levent.** If you emerge from Kanyon at night, the sight looks more like a New York or Hong Kong scene than Istanbul. Blue and white neon-lit skyscrapers show off the city's financial and business hub, the international banking headquarters growing vertically year by year. By 2010, there are likely to be another two buildings added, with 81 and 101 floors respectively. When I see the lights cast on the birds flying above, I can't help but contrast the scene with the spot-lit Yeni Camii (see p 71),which seems to summarize today's Istanbul. 🕒 *20 min.*

Kanyon.

Jewish **Heritage**


Ayvansaray C.
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Haliç Köprüsü
BALAT KARABAŞ M
Haliç Parki
MOLLA AŞKI M
Mahkemealti C.
Balat Vapur Iskele C.
Çinçinliçeşme S.
Sutan Çeşme C.
Vodina C.
KASIM GÜNANI M
HIZIR CAVUS M
Akşemsettin Parki
TAHTA MINARE M
Mürselpaşa C.
Vodina C.
HAMANI MUHITTIN M
KATIP MUSLUHITTIN M
TEVKII CAFER M
Ismailağa C.
Manyasizade C.
Darüşşafaka C.
HATIP MUSLIHITTIN M
Sultan Selimiye Camii
Yavuz Selim C.
Ali Naki S.
Incebel S.
Tabak Yunus S.
Abdulezelpaşa C.
ABDI SUBAŞI M
LÜÇÜK MUSTAFA PAŞA
Haliç (Golden Horn)
Hasköy C.
Ok Meydani C.
Kasimpaşa Hasköy C.
Akasylar S.
Hasbahçe S.
Aynali Kavak Kasri Müzesi
KASIMPAŞA M
Zindan Arkasi Mezarliğ
Kaşkizak Tersanesi C.
MÜFTÜ ALI M
Karadeniz C.
Cibali C.
Haliç C.
ŞEYH RESMI M
Kadiçeşmesi S.
Müftühaman S.
HAYDAR M
KASAP DEMIRHUN M
Hattat Izzet S.
Hattat Nazif C.
SINAN AĞA M
Haydar C.
Fatih Camii
KIRMASTI M
Mihçilar C.
Büyükkaraman C.
Eski Mutaflar C.
Omerefendi S.
Itfaiye C.
HACI KADIN M
Atatürk B.
Azep Askeri S.
Darülhadis S.
İtfaiye Müzesi
Itfaiye C.
Karikatur ve Mizah Müzesi
Macar Kardesler
Information
Museum
Mosque
Post Office
Police Station
Ferry
Train Station
Metro
Tram

① **500. Yil Vakfi Türk Musevileri Müzesi (Quincentennial Foundation Museum of Turkish Jews)**

② **Kamondo Merdivenleri (Camondo Staircase)**

③ **Galata Residence**

④ **Schneidertempel Art Gallery**

⑤ **Ashkenazi Synagogue**

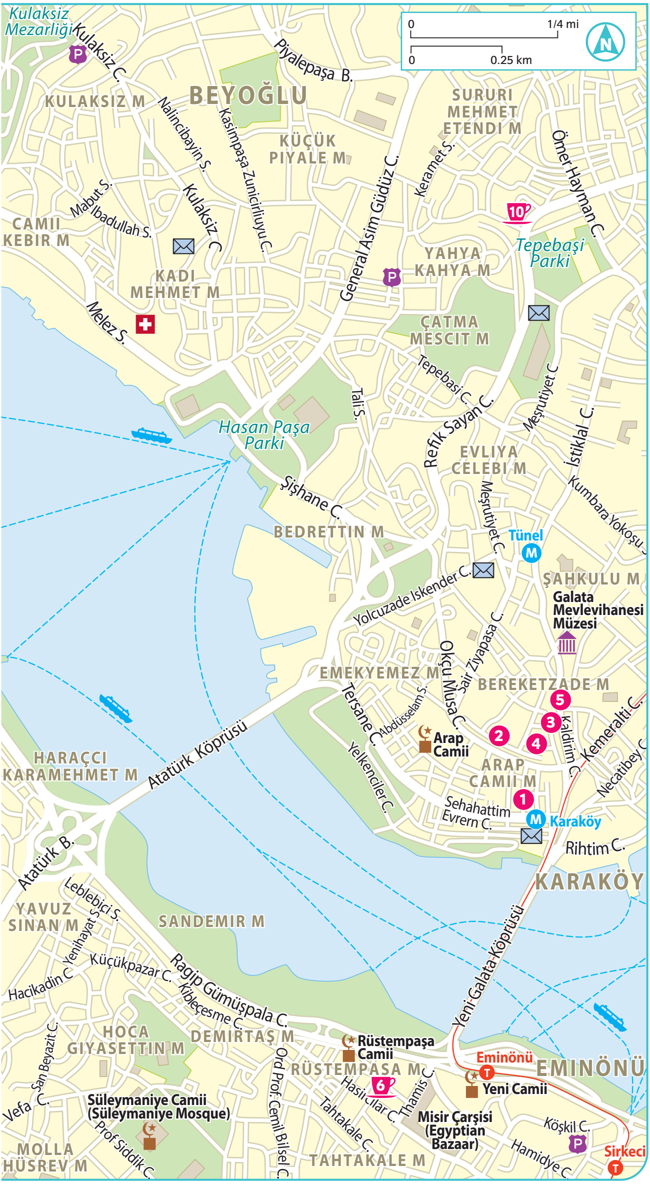
6 Levi

⑦ **Çifit Çarşisi**

⑧ **Ahrida Synagogue**

⑨ **Çavuş Hamam**

10 Carne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KÜÇÜK PIYALE M
SURURI MEHMET ETENDI M
Keramet S.
Ömer Hayman C.
General Asim Güdüz C.
Mabut S.
Ibadullah S.
Kulaksiz C.
CAMII KEBIR M
10
Tepebaşi Parki
YAHYA KAHYA M
KADI MEHMET M
P
Melez S.
ÇATMA MESCIT M
Tepebasi C.
Meşrutiyet C.
Tali S.
Refik Sayan C.
İstiklal C.
Hasan Paşa Parki
EVLIYA ÇELEBI M
Kumbara Yokoşu
Şişhane C.
Meşrutiyet C.
BEDRETTIN M
Tünel
M
ŞAHKULU M
Galata Mevlevihanesi Müzesi
Yolcuzade Iskender C.
Sair Ziyapasa C.
Okçu Musa C.
EMEKYEMEZ M
BEREKETZADE M
Tersane C.
Abdüsselam S.
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Kemeralti C.
Arap Camii
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4
Necatibey C.
HARAÇCI KARAMEHMET M
Yelkenciler C.
ARAP CAMII M
Atatürk Köprüsü
1
Sehahattim Evrern C.
M
Karaköy
Rihtim C.
Atatürk B.
KARAKÖY
Leblebici S.
YAVUZ SINAN M
Yenihayat S.
SANDEMIR M
Küçükpazar C.
Yeni Galata Köprüsü
Hacikadin C.
Ragip Gümüşpala C.
Kibleçesme C.
HOCA GIYASETTIN M
DEMIRTAŞ M
Rüstempaşa Camii
Eminönü
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San Beyazit C.
RÜSTEMPAŞA M
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Vefa C.
Hasircilar C.
6
Thamis C.
Yeni Camii
Süleymaniye Camii (Süleymaniye Mosque)
Ord Prof Cemil Bilsel C.
Tahtakale C.
Misir Çarşisi (Egyptian Bazaar)
Köşkil C.
Prof Siddik C.
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Hamidye C.
MOLLA HÜSREV M
TAHTAKALE M
Sirkeci
T

Persecuted Jews began coming to Istanbul 500 years ago, ever since welcomed by the Ottoman Empire after fleeing the Spanish Inquisition, beginning in the mid-16th century. Pockets of Jewish heritage dot the city, but we start off in Galata and Karaköy (named after the Karaite Jewish sect that once lived there), then move on to Balat, sampling good kosher cuisine en route. Very little remains of the once-flourishing community in these areas, most having moved out to the wealthier suburbs. I love traveling between the two areas by boat – at the time of writing, ferries leave Eminönü for Balat at 50 minutes past every hour. Recent attacks on synagogues and increasing Islamic extremism have made security much tighter (see below). **Tram or tunnel to Karaköy.**

① ★★ **500. Yil Vakfi Türk Musevileri Müzesi (Quincentennial Foundation Museum of Turkish Jews, or Jewish Museum of Turkey).** Snuck up a small alleyway in Karaköy (look out for the 'museum' sign), this was once the Zulfaris Synagogue, founded in 1671 and a museum since 2001, hardly visible from the outside. Its excellent information boards and exhibits reveal how the Sephardic Jews – those originating from Spain and Portugal – considered the Ottomans as saviors in 1326 when they freed them from Byzantine oppression in Bursa, even more so when forced to flee Spain during the Spanish Inquisition in 1492 and welcomed by Beyazid II (1448–1512). More recently, Atatürk invited many Jewish scientists from Nazi Germany, and several Turkish diplomats succeeded in saving Turkish Jews during the Holocaust. As well as religious artifacts like Torah scrolls and silver goblets that were used during services, don't miss the exhibits from Istanbul's first Ottoman printing house, and Turkey's first printed book in 1493. The balcony – originally the ladies' gallery – has temporary exhibitions, and the ethnography section draws parallels with Muslim culture, especially circumcision, marriage and death. Outside, its first floor shop has some related books in English. 🕒 *90 min. Selanik Pasaji, Percemli Sokak, Karaköy Meydani.* ☎ *0212 292 6333. www.muze500.com. Donations requested. Mon–Thurs 10am–4pm; Fri and Sun 10am–2pm; Closed Sat and Jewish hols. Tram or tunnel: Karaköy.*

Silver Torah adornments at the Jewish Museum.

② ★★ **Kamondo Merdivenleri (Camondo Staircase).** This short, curvaceous double staircase (see also *Neighborhood Walks* p 63) leading up from Voyvoda Caddesi, the historic banking hub, was built by Avram Camondo (sometimes spelt Kamondo), a leading merchant in the Jewish

Curvaceous Camondo Staircase, gift from Avram Camondo.

community and head of the prosperous family. The first foreigner given the right to have having real estate in the Ottoman Empire, he built this still much-used staircase in the 19th century as a mark of his gratitude, and more importantly to ease the uphill journey to the family's home (see below) when baby Moise was born in 1860. 🕘 *10 min. From Voyvoda Cad. Tram or tunnel: Karaköy.*

③ ★ **Galata Residence.** Now a lovely hotel, this was the Camondo's family home in the thick of things, Galata, once the hub of the Ladino-(Judaeo-Spanish) speaking Jewish community and close to numerous synagogues. The wooden house, originally known as Felek Han, was converted into apartments in 1844 by Gabriel Tedeschie, who also built Ashkenazi Synagogue (see bullet ㊳), and has seen many transformations including a school for Alyans Israelit Universel, a trade center, and finally a hotel. 🕘 *10 min. 2 Felek Sokak, off Bankalar Caddesi, Galata.* ☎ *0212 292 4841. www.galataresidence.com. Tram or tunnel: Karaköy.*

Practical Matters

With the high security surrounding all synagogues in Istanbul, increased since the bombing of Neve Shalom synagogue in 2003, forward planning for any visit is essential, even if you simply want to attend a service. Send an email via **www.musevicemaati.com** at least three working days before your visit, and you will be sent a form to fill in names of all visitors, plus scanned passport page and exact dates of your visit. Don't forget to bring your passport, even if attending a service.

The Camondo Dynasty

Fleeing their Spanish-Portuguese homeland during the Spanish Inquisition, when Jews were forced to convert to Christianity or be killed, the Camondo family soon became renowned as Istanbul's best-known family of bankers, financiers and philanthropists. One of their most famous purchases was Camondo Han, a huge building on the Golden Horn, now headquarters of the Turkish Navy, which housed studios of many prominent Turkish artists and a meeting place for luminaries of the world of literature and philosophy. Avram, the patriarch, moved to Paris in his 80s, and when he died in 1873 his body was flown back to Istanbul for a state funeral and burial at his tomb in Hasköy.

④ ★ **Schneidertempel Art Gallery.** Built in 1894 as one of the city's few Ashkenazi synagogues, for Jews originating mainly from Eastern Europe, this well-restored building holds temporary exhibitions relating to Jewish life and culture. Its most striking feature is the simple Star of David stained-glass window, above the area which used to be the ark, the ornamental 'closet' that contains the Torah scrolls. (Opening hours can be erratic.) 🕘 *30 min. Felek Sokak, Galata. Mon–Thurs 10.30am–5pm; Fri 10.30am–3pm in winter, 5pm in summer; Sun 12–6pm. Closed Jewish hols. Tram or tunnel: Karaköy.*

⑤ ★★ **Ashkenazi Synagogue.** Turkey's only Ashkenazi Synagogue, this was established by tradesmen over 200 years ago for Jews that migrated from Macedonia and Poland. Far from being a flourishing community, its members were poor tailors, many women making a living as prostitutes at the (then) numerous local brothels. These days its congregants trace roots from Baghdad, and Turkish cities Adana, Bursa and Konya. The black wooden ark, holding the Torah scrolls brought by Jews on their way to Israel, is carved with letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and was brought from Kiev. The sky-blue painted domed ceiling makes a striking addition. From here, walk down to Karaköy and either take the tram or walk over Galata Bridge to Eminönü. 🕘 *30 min. 37 Yuksekkaldirim Cad. By appointment only; Donations welcome. Tram or Tunnel Karaköy; tunnel Tünel.*

Carved wooden ark at Ashkenazi Synagogue, a gift from Kiev Jews.

6 **kids** ★ **Levi.** One of Istanbul's oldest kosher (adhering to Jewish dietary laws) restaurants, tucked away from busy Eminönü, enjoy a hearty lunch of traditional Sephardic dishes, mainly meaty stews. Open lunchtimes only. *Çavuşbaşi Han 23/10, Tahmis Kalçin Sokak, Eminönü.* ☎ *0212 512 1196. $.*

⑦ ★★ **kids** **Çifit Çarşisi.** This unassuming daily street-market, covering Lavanta and Leblebiciler Sokaks, is typical of a neighborhood like Balat. It was actually known as Çifit (the slightly derogatory Ottoman name for Jews) Çarşisi, although only Balat locals would know it by that name. Only about 20 of the original Jewish traders still remain today. When you turn down **Köpelbasi Caddesi**, look up at #82A to see the galleon on the wall above the door, symbol of the Sephardic Jews. This was the home of shopkeeper Leon Burudo, one of the oldest Jewish traders, who died in 2006. 🕒 *20 min. Ferry: Balat; or bus 35D from Eminönü.*

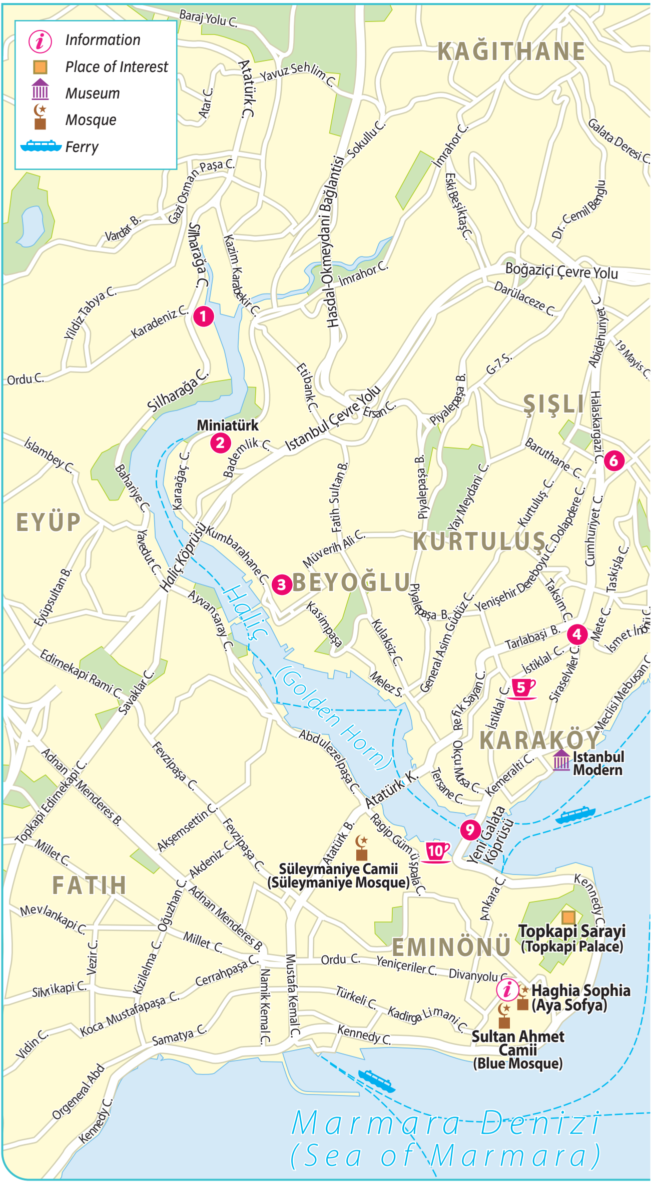
Ahrida Synagogue's exterior, hidden away in Fener.

⑧ ★★ **Ahrida Synagogue.** The oldest Sephardic synagogue in Turkey, established in 1430 by Macedonians, still attracts about 100 congregants every Saturday. The exquisite chandelier suspended from the domed central ceiling was restored in 1991, although its most eye-catching piece is the Bimah, the central raised platform from where the reading of the Torah takes place: Some say it's shaped like a galleon, the symbol of the Sephardic Jews who sailed here during the Spanish Inquisition. Others think it is based on the shape of Noah's Ark, representing freedom. In the courtyard, with a fabulous tree with twisted trunk, is a plaque naming all the Jewish benefactors who gave financial support. For essential information on visiting, please see '*Practical Matters*' info box p 37. *9 Kurkcucesme Sokak, Balat. www.musevicemaati.com. By appointment only, Mon–Fri 9.30am–noon. Ferry: Balat; or bus 35D.*

⑨ ★ **Çavuş Hamam.** Although you may only be able to take a quick peak inside, this hamam is more interesting for its history than for its architecture – even if it was built by Sinan (see *Art & Architecture* Highlights p 173). When Jews began to live in Balat from the mid-15th century, they requested of Süleyman the Magnificent to have one built specially for them, as it would also have been used as a *mikvah*, for women's monthly ritual bathing. Permission was granted, and Mimar Sinan built two special hamams, this one (the only remaining one) and one in Fener. 🕒 *10 min.*

10 ★★ **Carne.** Istanbul's top kosher restaurant moved venue but retained its good reputation for great Sephardic dishes like spinach meatballs in tomato sauce. Beautifully presented. *Halaskargazi Caddesi, Uzay Apt 53, Harbiye.* ☎ *0212 241 8585.$$.*

Istanbul **with Kids**


Information
Place of Interest
Museum
Mosque
Ferry
KAĞITHANE
ŞIŞLI
KURTULUŞ
BEYOĞLU
KARAKÖY
EYÜP
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EMINÖNÜ
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Istanbul Modern
Süleymaniye Camii (Süleymaniye Mosque)
Topkapi Sarayi (Topkapi Palace)
Haghia Sophia (Aya Sofya)
Sultan Ahmet Camii (Blue Mosque)
Haliç (Golden Horn)
Marmara Denizi (Sea of Marmara)
Baraj Yolu C.
Yavuz Sehlim C.
Atatürk C.
Atar C.
Sokullu C.
İmrahor C.
Eski Beşiktaş C.
Galata Deresi C.
Dr. Cemil Bengü
Gazi Osman Paşa C.
Vardar B.
Silhağa C.
Kazim Karabekir C.
Hasdal-Okmeydani Bağlantisi
Boğaziçi Çevre Yolu
Darülaceze C.
Abideihuriyet C.
19 Mayis C.
Yildiz Tabya C.
Karadeniz C.
Ordu C.
Silharağa C.
Etibank C.
Istanbul Çevre Yolu
Ersan C.
Piyalepaşa B.
G-7 S.
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Bahariye C.
Fatih Sultan B.
Yay Meydani C.
Baruthane C.
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Kurtuluş C.
Dolapdere C.
Cumhuriyet C.
Taşkişla C.
Yavedut C.
Haliç Köprüsü
Kumbarahane C.
Müverih Ali C.
Eyüpsultan B.
Ayvansaray C.
Kasimpaşa
Kulaksiz C.
Piyalepaşa B.
General Asim Gündüz C.
Yenişehir Dereboyu C.
Taksim C.
Tarlabaşi B.
Mete C.
İsmet İnönü C.
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Siraselviler C.
Meclisi Mebusan C.
Edirnekapi Rami C.
Savaklar C.
Melez S.
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Kennedy C.
Ankara C.
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Kizilelma C.
Cerrahpaşa C.
Namik Kemal C.
Mustafa Kemal C.
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Yeniçeriler C.
Divanyolu C.
Silvrikapi C.
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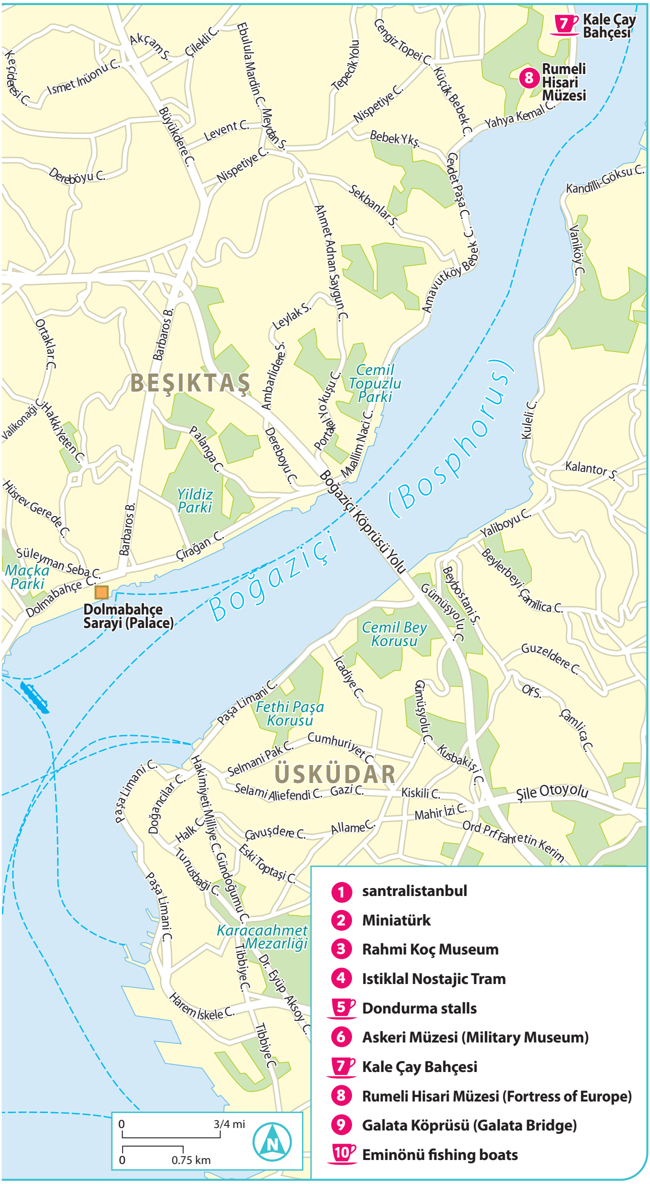
7 Kale Çay Bahçesi
8 Rumeli Hisari Müzesi
BEŞIKTAŞ
ÜSKÜDAR
Boğaziçi
(Bosphorus)
Dolmabahçe Sarayi (Palace)
Maçka Parki
Yildiz Parki
Cemil Topuzlu Parki
Cemil Bey Korusu
Fethi Paşa Korusu
Karacaahmet Mezarliği
Keçidere si C.
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Akçam S.
Çilekli C.
Ebulula Mardin C.
Meydan S.
Tepecik Yolu
Cengiz Topel C.
Küçük Bebek C.
Nispetiye C.
Yahya Kemal C.
Bebek Y.kş.
Büyükdere C.
Levent C.
Dereboyu C.
Cevdet Paşa C.
Sekbanlar S.
Kandilli-Göksu C.
Vaniköy C.
Ahmet Adnan Saygun C.
Bebek C.
Amavutköy
Barbaros B.
Ortaklar C.
Leylak S.
Ambarlidere S.
Valikonaği C.
Hakki Yeten C.
Palanga C.
Portakal Yokuşu C.
Muallim Naci C.
Kuleli C.
Kalantor S.
Hüsrev Gerede C.
Süleyman Seba C.
Çirağan C.
Boğaziçi Köprüsü Yolu
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Beylerbeyi Çamlica C.
Beybostani S.
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Dolmabahçe C.
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Paşa Limani C.
Cumhuriyet C.
Kusbakisi C.
Selmani Pak C.
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Hakimiyeti Milliye C.
Selami Aliefendi C.
Gazi C.
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Şile Otoyolu
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Halk C.
Çavuşdere C.
Allame C.
Ord Prf Fahretin Kerim
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1 santralistanbul
2 Miniatürk
3 Rahmi Koç Museum
4 Istiklal Nostajic Tram
5 Dondurma stalls
6 Askeri Müzesi (Military Museum)
7 Kale Çay Bahçesi
8 Rumeli Hisari Müzesi (Fortress of Europe)
9 Galata Köprüsü (Galata Bridge)
10 Eminönü fishing boats

Much of everyday Istanbul life is a kid's paradise, from watching fishermen on Galata Bridge to its world-class museums. The locals adore kids, so don't be surprised when grown men coo over your baby. The list below is too much in one day, so pick and choose from these highlights to suit your children's ages and interests. All museums have family-friendly cafés and many of these places can be reached by boat, especially the Haliç (Golden Horn) Ferry Line, an attraction in itself. **START: Shuttle bus from Atatürk Kültür Merkez, Taksim Square.**

① ★★★ **santralistanbul.** As well as the fabulous art exhibitions at this refurbished Ottoman power station (see **Modern Istanbul,** p 32; bullet ⑦), the **Museum of Energy** has a Play Zone with machines, buttons, and games galore designed for ages 4–14 (although adults like me will love it too). Create magnetic sculptures and even your own electricity, then take a closer look at huge turbine generators dating back to 1911. Kids can mess around in the Switch Gear Room, where the original connecting cables distributed electricity to the whole city; it's not interactive – so no danger of them fusing Istanbul. 🕘 *1 hr. Eski Silahtarage Elektrik Santrali, Silahtaraga Mahallesi,Kazim Karabekir Cad 1, Eyüp.* ☎ *0212 444 0428.www.santralistanbul.org. Admission free. Tues–Sun 10am–8pm. Free shuttle from Atatürk Kültür Merkez (Taksim); boat from Eminönü to Eyüp; bus 44B or 47 from Eminönü.*

② ★★ **Miniatürk.** If you want to see Istanbul's best landmarks close up, this outdoor museum is the place where a few strides (even for little people) take you from Galata Tower to the Blue Mosque via Dolmabahçe Palace. As well as 45 models of Istanbul's best-loved monuments plus 15 from the old Ottoman Empire and the Egyptian pyramids, the toy train is ideal for small passengers to weave their way around the park. An indoor exhibition recreates the World War II battlefields of the Dardanelles, complete with machine-gun fire and bombs, while the playground, giant

Tiny world wonders at Miniatürk.

Boarding the Boeing at Rahmi Koç Museum.

chess set and lovely café make it a great family trip. 🕘 ***1–2 hrs. Imrahor Cad, Borsa Duragi Mevkii, Sütlüce. ☎ 0212 222 2882. www.miniaturk.com.tr. Admission 10 YTL. Mon–Fri 9am–7pm; Sat and Sun 9am–9pm. Boat from Eminönü or Eyüp to Sütlüce; bus 47 from Eminönü or 54HT from Taksim.***

③ ★★ **Rahmi Koç Museum.** Kids can jump aboard a Douglas DC-3 (1942) plane, gaze at huge anchors and explore a plethora of cars ranging from Formula 1 and 1908 Model T Ford to a 1961 German Amphicar. Timed tickets can be bought to enter the submarine. This private collection of Turkey's great industrialist Rahmi Koç (b 1930) also houses sawmills and lathes grinding into action when you enter the workshop. I love pressing the buttons on the 'How Does it Work?' exhibits to watch the mechanism in a cutaway car or domestic washing machine. At weekends, ride the diesel train along the Golden Horn and the traditional Carousel. 🕘 ***90 min. 27 Haskoy Cad, Haskoy. ☎ 0212 369 6600.www.rmk-museum.org.tr. Admission 10 YTL adults; 5 YTL students/children. Submarine 4.5 YTL, 3 YTL. Tues–Fri 10am–5pm; Sat and Sun 10am–7pm. Bus 54HS from Taksim.***

④ ★ **Istiklal Nostajic Tram.** This one-carriage red tram trundles along Istiklal Caddesi between Taksim and Tünel, a favorite with visitors, and locals avoiding the mass of pedestrians. Originally running along the 19th-century Grande Rue de Pera (Istiklal's previous name) until taken out of service in 1961, it was restored and re-introduced in 1990. Grab a window seat for a street-level view for the 1.6km journey, taking about 10 minutes, with a stop halfway at Galatasaray Lisesi (see *Neighborhood Walks* Istiklal

Nostajic Tram running down Istiklal Caddesi.

Mehter – Band of the Ottoman Army

The world's oldest military band, the Mehter accompanied the Ottoman army into battle to instill confidence and, ideally, strike terror into the enemy. These days, various bands perform marches and recitals in full Ottoman costume at the **Azkeri Müzesi** (daily), weekly in **Eyüp** (see p 58) and **Dolmabahçe Palace** (see p 20) plus other special events, still using traditional Turkish instruments including *zurna* (reed instrument) and *davul* (large drum). Its stirring style and beat are thought to have influenced European classical composers like Mozart, Beethoven and Haydn—although they presumably didn't have to evoke the terror of their Ottoman counterparts.

p 52). Kids will love the driver's constant clanging of the original bell to shoo the pedestrians out of the way. Use your *akbil* (transport token; see *Savvy Traveler* p 164) or pay the driver. 🕐 ***10 min. Trams run from Atatürk Monument (Taksim Meydani) to Tunel Meydani, every 5–8 mins; 9am–11pm. Ticket 1 YTL.***

5 ★ **Dondurma stalls.** You can't miss the traditional *dondurma* (ice-cream) stalls dotted along Istiklal—originally from the city of Kahramanmaraş, and thicker, stickier and stretchier than normal ice cream, thanks to extra ingredients like mastic and *sahlep* (starch from orchids). Sellers are usually clad in traditional Ottoman costume garb and entertain all when churning it out into the cup or cone. ***Istiklal Cad. $.***

⑥ ★ **Askeri Müzesi (Military Museum).** The army has a major role in Istanbul's history—modern Turkey's founder Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (see *History*, p 170) was previously an army general—and this well laid-out museum celebrates military history from Ottoman to present day. Highlights include the Hall of the Conquest of Istanbul, recreating the battle scene and, from the same era, the unbelievably thick chains placed at the entrance of the Golden Horn. Kids will love the dazzling Ottoman gold-plated armor and Yemeni daggers. People gather for the 3pm Mehter performance, the uniformed Janissary band (outdoor in summer, indoor in winter) of the pompous band that led the army into battle (see box section below). ***Harbiye.*** ☎ ***0212 233 2720.*** 🕐 ***90 min. (inc Mehter). Admission 3 YTL adults; 1 YTL child; extra for camera, video. Wed–Sun 9am–4.30pm; Mehter band 3–4pm. Metro: Harbiye.***

Scramble the battlements at Rumeli Hisari.

The amphitheater at Rumeli Hisari still holds performances today.

7 ★ **Kale Çay Bahçesi.** Recharge before exploring Rumeli Hisari Müzesi at this popular tea-garden at the fortress's base for sloppy Turkish omelets, walnut cake and toasted sandwiches, with of course glasses of tea and plenty of soft drinks. ***38 Yahya Kemal Cad.*** ☎ ***0212 257 5578. $.***

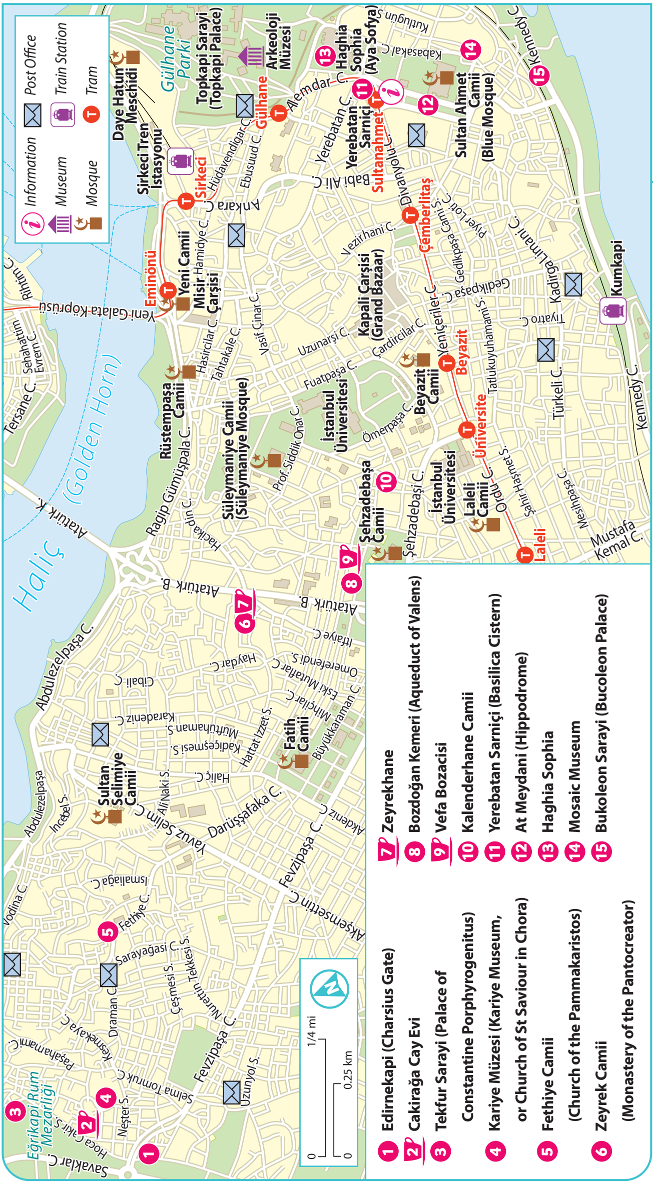
⑧ ★★★ **Rumeli Hisari Müzesi (Fortress of Europe).** This 30,000m^2 landmark fortress overlooking the Bosphorus has old walls and watchtowers, fabulous for scrambling around especially as it's surprisingly quiet (it also closes oddly early, even in summer.) Built by Mehmet the Conqueror in 1452 in only four months (don't we all wish for builders like that?) it lies opposite his Anadolu Hisari (Fortress of Asia) on the narrowest part of the water, as the Sultan planned for his siege of Constantinople in 1453. Its three sturdy towers, 12-sided flag tower, and rows of canons dating back to Süleyman the Magnificent make great exploring, though hold on to little ones if you're climbing rough steps up the walls. Look out for the amphitheatre, venue of occasional concerts in summer, and take in the views of the huge cemetery from Zaghanos Paşa Kulesi, the southwestern tower. ◷ ***90 min. Yahya Kemal Cad, Sariyer.*** ☎ ***0212 263 5305. Admission 2 YTL. Thurs–Tues 9am–4.30pm. Bus: 25 or 40E from Besiktas; 559C from Taksim then 10-min walk.***

⑨ ★★ **Galata Köprüsü (Bridge).** One of Istanbul's great landmarks (see *Best in One Day* p 10), this makes a lovely end to the day. From the bridge, watch the row of fishermen cast lines, peering optimistically into murky waters below. Children can check out their pots of bait (usually maggots) and their catch of tiny fish. Breathtaking views take in ferries cruising up the Haliç (Golden Horn), the mêlée of people crowding into Eminönü's markets, and spot-lit mosques at night. This is one of my favorite places to hear the cacophony of sounds of *azan* (call to prayer) from a myriad mosques. ***Bridge joining Eminönü to Karaköy. Any bus to Eminönü; tram: Eminönü or Karaköy.***

10 ★★ **Eminönü fishing boats.** Bobbing on Eminönü's waterfront are several huge ornamental fishing boats, offering fresh fish cooked by elaborately dressed attendants. Feast on cheap *balik ekmek* (fresh fish in bread) with salad, or a corn-on-the-cob with a cool drink. This is an unbeatable people-watching spot for all ages. ***Eminönü pier, west of Galata Bridge. $.***

Hub of fishing on Galata Bridge.

Byzantine **Beauties**


Information
Museum
Mosque
Post Office
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Haliç
(Golden Horn)
Yeni Galata Köprüsü
Eminönü
Yeni Camii
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Sirkeci Tren İstasyonu
Sirkeci
Daye Hatun Mescidi
Gülhane Parki
Topkapi Sarayi (Topkapi Palace)
Arkeoloji Müzesi
Gülhane
Alemdar C.
Haghia Sophia (Aya Sofya)
Yerebatan Sarniçi
Sultanahmet
Sultan Ahmet Camii (Blue Mosque)
Kabasakal C.
Kutlugün S.
Kennedy C.
Divanyolu C.
Çemberlitaş
Kapali Çarşisi (Grand Bazaar)
Vezirhani C.
Beyazit Camii
Beyazit
İstanbul Üniversitesi
Üniversite
Laleli Camii
Laleli
Ordu C.
Kumkapi
Kadirga Limani C.
Mustafa Kemal C.
Rüstempaşa Camii
Süleymaniye Camii (Süleymaniye Mosque)
Şehzadebaşa Camii
Şehzadebaşi C.
Ragip Gümüşpala C.
Atatürk K.
Atatürk B.
Abdulezelpaşa C.
Fatih Camii
Sultan Selimiye Camii
Yavuz Selim C.
Darüşşafaka C.
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1 Edirnekapi (Charsius Gate)
2 Cakirağa Cay Evi
3 Tekfur Sarayi (Palace of Constantine Porphyrogenitus)
4 Kariye Müzesi (Kariye Museum, or Church of St Saviour in Chora)
5 Fethiye Camii (Church of the Pammakaristos)
6 Zeyrek Camii (Monastery of the Pantocreator)
7 Zeyrekhane
8 Bozdoğan Kemeri (Aqueduct of Valens)
9 Vefa Bozacisi
10 Kalenderhane Camii
11 Yerebatan Sarniçi (Basilica Cistern)
12 At Meydani (Hippodrome)
13 Haghia Sophia
14 Mosaic Museum
15 Bukoleon Sarayi (Bucoleon Palace)

You've seen plenty of Istanbul's mosques, now it's time for its world-famous Byzantine monuments. Once called Byzantium, Emperor Constantine I made the city capital of the Roman Empire in 324AD, renamed it Constantinople, and adopted Christianity. Today's Istanbul boasts Byzantine-era churches, cisterns and squares. Starting at Edirnekapi, geographically the tour's highest point, you can walk between most venues and although it looks like a long list, you've probably visited some on previous days. **START: Bus to Edirnekapi.**

① ★★ kids **Edirnekapi (Charsius Gate).** The name of this gate, at the 6.5 km-long fifth-century city walls built by Emperor Theodosius II (408–450AD), now refers to the area of a mass transport hub, best seen when you climb the poker-straight walls. Although this is a restored area, you can edge a little west, off the main road to see part of its original structure, with Ottoman carvings over the arch. 🕘 *30 min. Bus no.87 to Edirnekapi.*

② ★ **Cakirağa Cay Evi.** Rest under the leafy canopy against the city walls for a glass of Turkish tea – and try to buy *karpuz* watermelon (if in season) from the adjacent stall. *Hoca Çakir Cad. Bus: 87 to Edirnekapi. $.*

③ ★★ kids **Tekfur Sarayi (Palace of Constantine Porphyrogenitus).** Closed for restoration since 2006 (completion date unknown), you can visualize the magnificence of this former Byzantine palace, built into the city walls, but now a mere shell. Since completion in the early 14th century, after the Ottoman conquest it became a brothel after the Ottoman conquest, and later a pottery workshop and a poorhouse before being abandoned in late 18th century. Pop into the crowded cooing **Pigeon Market** (weekends only) in the adjacent sports court for hearty trading in birds costing up to $500. (It's not really Byzantine, but I could tenuously trace it to the centuries-old Middle Eastern hobby of pigeon racing.) 🕘 *15–30 min. Şişehane Cad. Bus no.87 to Edirnekapi.*

Ruins of Tekfur Sarayi, previously a palace, brothel and workshop.

Christ adorns the dome at Fethiye Camii.

④ ★★★ **Kariye Müzesi (Kariye Museum, or Church of St Saviour in Chora).** This modest-looking 11th-century church later gained its world-class frescoes and mosaics procured by Theodore Metochites (1270–1332), writer and senior member of the Byzantine administration who died right here in 1332. Amongst these stunning works, reflecting a new art mentality of the time, look out for his portrait in the inner narthex. Metochites took the genealogy of Christ as his starting point when commissioning mosaics covering its domes and walls. The two domes of the inner narthex hold the centerpiece—Christ, plus the Life of the Virgin series. Despite being converted to a mosque soon after the Conquest, it's interesting to note that nothing remains from the Ottoman period. 🕘 *60–90 min. (see also Best In Three Days, p 20).*

⑤ ★★ **Fethiye Camii (Church of the Pammakaristos).** Nestled in Fener (see *Neighborhood Walks p 76) 10 minutes away,* this stone-and-brick façade houses a charming display of Byzantine mosaics. Like other churches of the era, it was converted into a mosque after the Fall of Constantinople in 1453, and much later a museum. Its mosaics and frescoes were only unearthed in the late 20th century, of which the startling centerpiece is the mosaic of Jesus with the prophets of the Pentateuch covering the dome of the grave chapel. 🕘 *30 min. See p 77.*

⑥ ★★ **kids** **Zeyrek Camii (Monastery of the Pantocreator).** I love the cobbled walk up to Küçükpazar from the main road, now a rundown neighborhood of wooden houses and football-playing kids but once a wealthy Byzantine area. This mosque (almost in ruins and due for restoration from late 2008) was the original church of the monastery built by Empress Eirene Komnena in 1118–1124, after which Mehmet II turned the monastery into a *medrese* (religious school) and the church into a mosque. Closed outside prayer-times, ask around for the caretaker (tip appreciated) who will show you its dark high-ceilinged interior, and hopefully its ornate marble mosaic floors, now hidden by carpet. 🕘 *20 min. Ibadethane Sok.Tram: Laleli, then walk.*

⑦ ★ **Zeyrekhane.** Sip a (pricey) coffee or taste classic Turkish dishes from the restaurant's terrace, a restored building within the monastery complex, perfect for a Byzantine tour. *10 Arkasi Sok.* ☎ *0212 532 2778. Tram: Laleli then walk, or bus to Atatürk Bul. $$$.*

⑧ ★★ **kids** **Bozdoğan Kemeri (Aqueduct of Valens).** You probably passed under these sturdy arches from the airport, or by bus to Edirnekapi. This 4th-century two-tiered aqueduct completed under Emperor Valens carried water from Belgrade Forest to the palace, still in use centuries later. Follow it a few meters west to the arches' north

Locals' favorite for boza, the famous fermented millet drink.

side to join locals drinking tea, my favorite way to appreciate this significant Byzantine feat of engineering. 🕘 *20 min. Aqueduct runs parallel to Mustafa Kemalpaşa Cad.*

9 kids ★★ Vefa Bozacisi. A well-trodden stone threshold indicates its age, locals' favorite since 1876 and an unchanged tiled interior. If you don't fancy drinking *boza*, made from fermented millet, try a fruity şira—or a simple ice-cream. ***104 Katip Çelebi Cad. Bus: 87 to Edirnekapi. $.***

⑩ ★★ Kalenderhane Camii. Site of a church since the 6th century, the red-hued brick church's once-gloomy interior improved when the Ottomans installed windows—after of course converting it to a mosque post-1453 and renaming it. Still functioning today, I love its gray-and-pink hued marble walls, with shafts of light creeping through high windows. Don't miss fragments of frescos in the entrance hall above the doorway—most of the frescos discovered during its 1966 restoration are now in the Archaeological Museum (see p 14). 🕘 *20 min. 16 Mart Şehitleri Cad. Open dawn-dusk. Tram: Üniversite.*

⑪ ★★ kids Yerebatan Sarniçi (Basilica Cistern). The Byzantines used their engineering know-how to bring water to the city (see *Best In Two Days,* p *16*), despite droughts and sieges. Founded in 532AD by Emperor Justinian, this vast underground cistern held around 100,000 tones of water, with 336 nine-metre-high columns holding up the roof, thought to be built by 7,000 slaves. Once traversed by rowing boat, now by walkway for visitors, this is one of countless cisterns lying under the city. Opposite the entrance, the

Windows galore at Kalenderhane Camii, thanks to the Ottomans.

Million Stone is what remains of a monumental landmark where distances from Byzantine's capital to other importance cities were once written. You're now standing on **Divan Yolu**, one of the most important streets of the empire, leading from Constantinople to Rome. 🕒 *40 min. See p 16 for details.*

⑫ **kids** ★★ **At Meydani (Hippodrome).** Ignore the camera-wielding tourists and imagine thousands of fans cheering on chariot racing in one of the Empire's largest hippodromes—also past venue of public executions. (See *Neighborhood Walks,* p *74.*) Built in the 3rd century and enlarged by Constantine I, this was the past venue where 30,000 were killed during the 532 AD Nika Riots between rival supporters of the Blue and Green chariot teams, with deep political roots. No horses or executions here today, just three ancient monuments, of which the **Egyptian Obelisk** was later adorned with scenes of Theodosius I (346–95AD) at the Hippodrome's royal box. 🕒 *30 min. At Meydani. Tram: Sultanahmet.*

⑬ ★★★ **kids** **Haghia Sophia.** Rebuilt by Emperor Justinian in 537AD, this hulking, almost squat exterior contrasts with its ornate interior (see *Best in One Day,* p *7).* This was a basic rule of Byzantine architecture, that the exterior should be modest, saving your attention to the inside. When you've savored the religious mosaics from the upper balcony, wander outside to find the Byzantine frieze of sheep, the remains of the earlier 5th-century Haghia Sophia. 🕒 *90 mins. See p 7, bullet* ①*.*

⑭ ★ **Mosaic Museum.** Nestled five minutes away behind Arasta Bazaar, the stone exterior is all that remains of Emperor Justinian's (487–565AD) vast 6th-century Byzantine Great Palace, in ruins since 1206. The mosaics you see today from the walkways—huntsmen spearing gazelles, tussling elephants and lions—is a fraction of the original, unearthed during excavations in 1912, and some of the last remaining Byzantine non-religious mosaics. Don't miss the display inside of how these incredible mosaics were discovered and restored. 🕒 *40 min. Arasta Çarşisi,Torun Sok.* ☎ *0212 518 1205. Tues–Sun 9am–4pm; 5 YTL. Tram: Sultanahmet.*

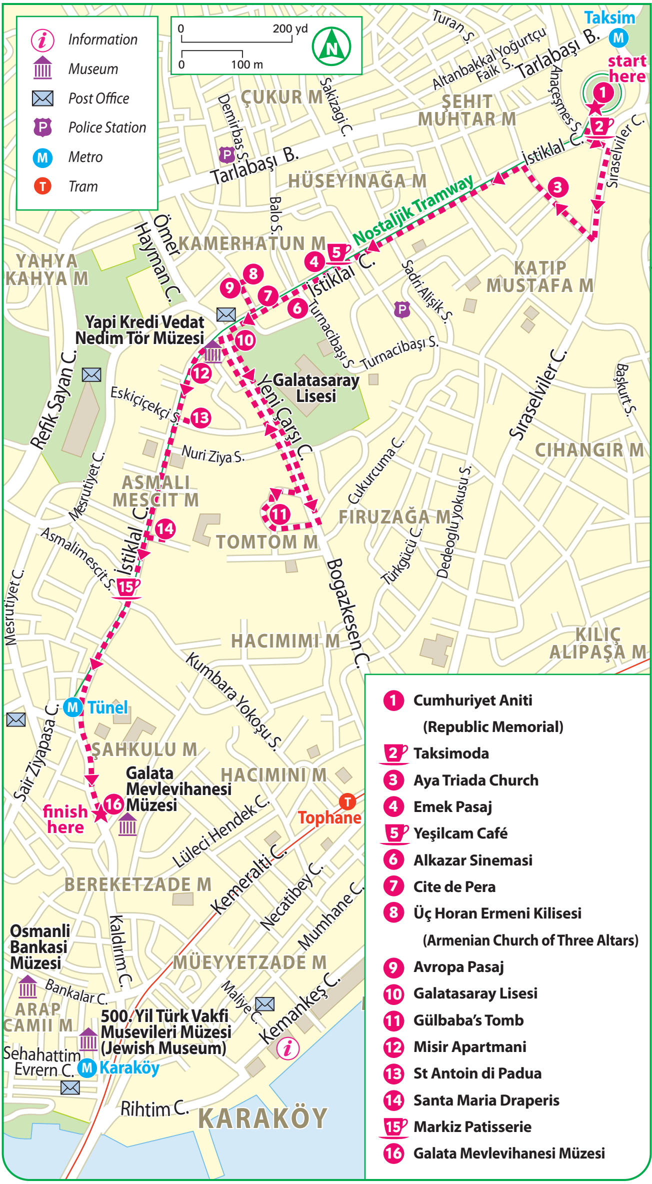
What remains of the great Bukoleon Sarayi.

⑮ ★ **Bukoleon Sarayi (Bucoleon Palace).** Originally the living quarters of the Byzantine emperors' Great Palace, this is the last remaining wall (and, given its propensity to be inhabited by tramps, not advisable to visit after dark). Built on the waterfront by Emperor Theophilos in 842AD, the western façade was demolished in 1873 when the railway line to Sirkeci was built. 🕒 *10 min. Kennedy Cad. Train: Kumpaki*. ●

3

The Best Neighborhood Walks

Istiklal **Caddesi**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Altanbakkal Yoğurtçu Faik S.
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Sakizagi C.
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HÜSEYINAĞA M
İstiklal C.
Nostaljik Tramway
Balo S.
KAMERHATUN M
Ömer Hayman C.
YAHYA KAHYA M
KATIP MUSTAFA M
Sadri Alişik S.
Turnacibaşı S.
Yapi Kredi Vedat Nedim Tör Müzesi
Galatasaray Lisesi
Refik Sayan C.
Eskiçiçekçi S.
Yeni Çarşı C.
Nuri Ziya S.
Meşrutiyet C.
ASMALI MESCIT M
Çukurcuma C.
FIRUZAĞA M
Dedeoglu yokusu S.
Türkgücü C.
Başkurt S.
CIHANGIR M
TOMTOM M
Asmalimescit S.
Bogazkesen C.
HACIMIMI M
KILIÇ ALIPAŞA M
Kumbara Yokoşu S.
Tünel
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Tophane
Lüleci Hendek C.
BEREKETZADE M
Kemeralti C.
Necatibey C.
Mumhane C.
Kaldirim C.
Osmanli Bankasi Müzesi
Bankalar C.
ARAP CAMII M
MÜEYYETZADE M
Maliye C.
Kemankeş C.
500. Yil Türk Vakfi Musevileri Müzesi (Jewish Museum)
Sehahattim Evrern C.
Karaköy
Rihtim C.
KARAKÖY
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1. Cumhuriyet Aniti (Republic Memorial)
2. Taksimoda
3. Aya Triada Church
4. Emek Pasaj
5. Yeşilcam Café
6. Alkazar Sinemasi
7. Cite de Pera
8. Üç Horan Ermeni Kilisesi (Armenian Church of Three Altars)
9. Avropa Pasaj
10. Galatasaray Lisesi
11. Gülbaba's Tomb
12. Misir Apartmani
13. St Antoin di Padua
14. Santa Maria Draperis
15. Markiz Patisserie
16. Galata Mevlevihanesi Müzesi

Modern Istanbul's main artery Istiklal Caddesi is the venue for shopping, football fans, demonstrations and thousands of people day and night. This 3km-long pedestrianized street (Independence Avenue) starts at **Taksim Meydani** and goes to **Tünel**, passing (walk or take the Nostaljic Tram) shops, restaurants, churches, cinemas, mosques and fine architecture. A fire in 1870 meant the streets were rebuilt in Art Nouveau style, bringing a new European style to Pera. Look up at the buildings even if they now house uninspiring stores; the stonework and carvings date back to the more glamorous days when the street was known as Grande Rue de Pera. **START:** **Bus or metro or tram/funicular to Taksim.**

① ★ **Cumhuriyet Aniti (Republic Memorial).** This striking arch-shaped monument was made by Italian sculptor Pietro Canonica in 1928 to commemorate the founding of the Turkish republic, and commissioned by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. At last, the post-Ottoman era meant figurative expressions could now be used (previously forbidden in Islam) so on one side we see Atatürk the leader, with Ismet Inönü (the Republic's first president) and Fevzi Çakmak (soldier and ex-prime minister) marking the foundation of the young Turkish Republic. Walk around the other side of the memorial to see Atatürk with soldiers, representing the War of Independence. It's an unusual format—not surprising considering it was originally designed as a square-shaped fountain. This is a hub for political demonstrations, best avoided, especially on May Day, which can get heated (injuries and arrests in 2008). 🕘 *10 min. Taksim Meydani.*

② ★ **Taksimoda.** The café-bar at the base of Taxim Hill hotel, with its floor-to-ceiling windows open in summer, provides a perfect people-watching spot of crowded Taksim Meydani over a coffee or eggs for breakfast. *5 Siraselviler Caddesi, Taksim Meydani.* ☎ *0212 334 8500. $$.*

③ ★ **Aya Triada Church.** After five minutes' walk, you'll catch your first glimpse of this majestic white church on the left, just off Istiklal Caddesi. Istanbul's largest Greek Orthodox Church, built in 1880 by Greek architect Kampanaki, is officially only open for Sunday services, although you might be lucky enough to have a quick peep inside if the caretaker is around. If so, you'll love the sunlight streaming through the four large circular stained-glass windows, casting deep red and green light throughout. It has less dark wood and gold than many Greek churches; look up to see the frescos above the gallery, and its painted dome. The entrance hall also has a painted ceiling, and

Noble landmark in Taksim Square.

Aya Triada, Istanbul's largest Greek Orthodox church.

mosaics of the Virgin Mary and Christ on the left. 🕘 ***15 min. Entrance off Meselik Sokak, off Istiklal Caddesi. Services Sun 9–11am. Bus, tram/funicular to Taksim.***

④ ★ **Emek Pasaj.** One of many 'pasaj' running off Istiklal with cheap clothes piled high in the covered alleyway; enter not so much for its tacky accessories but for the original stone ceiling with ornate carvings. It's obvious that little has been done to preserve or renovate, making it all the more charming. Further inside is the **Emek Sinema**, in existence since 1920 when it was known as Melek Sinemasi. 🕘***10 min. Most stores open daily 10am–8pm. 56 E Istiklal Cad.***

5 **kids** ★ **Yeşilcam Café.** Also a perfect spot for a winter's evening, complete with board-games (Istanbul Monopoly anyone?), rock music and comfort food of burgers and sandwiches. If it's sunny, get a table by the open windows overlooking the busy street. ***Emek Pasaj, 56E/1 Istiklal Caddesi.*** ☎ ***0212 293 7279. $.***

⑥ ★ **Alkazar Sinemasi.** You might find yourself visiting this cinema one evening, with Hollywood titles as well as Turkish movies, but check it out now for its façade's wonderful stonework, in keeping with the ornate style of the street's historic buildings. This was actually one of Beyoğlu's most important 19th century buildings, and had its days as a theatre, set up by Turkish actor Ayfer Feray 1928–1994), heart-throb of the 1950–70s. 🕘 ***10 min. 111 Istiklal Caddesi.***

⑦ ★★ **Cite de Pera.** This building – or rather its façade – is a great reminder of the Grande Rue de Pera's glory years. I'm not so keen on the colored glass in the renovated window, but love the ornate stone carvings above the entrance. In the 1940s, florists traded from the first-floor stores, and it was known as "Çiçek Pasaji" (Flower Passage), a name still used today. When the building collapsed in 1978 and renovated further, it was then filled with noisy *meyhanes* (fish restaurants). But not many people know that previously it was the Naum Theater hosting Italian operas, burned

Historic Cite de Pera, now Çiçek Pasaji.

Everyones' favorite meeting point, the Galatasaray Lisesi gates.

down in the great Pera fire of 1870. Greek-Turkish banker Hristaki Zografos Efendi bought the land, and the restored building was named Cite de Pera. These days it's a shadow of its former self with a few bars and restaurants (better restaurants nearby) but still worth a look inside. 🕘 *10 min. 172 Istiklal Caddesi.*

⑧ ★ **Üç Horan Ermeni Kilisesi (Armenian Church of Three Altars).** A real hidden gem behind **Balik Pasaj**, this church behind heavy wooden doors (usually open to the public) celebrated its 200th anniversary in May 2008. With a plain exterior and graceful interior, the story goes that an unknown sick man prayed to be cured, promising to build a church with three altars if his prayers were answered. Take a peek inside to see the famed altars. 🕘 *15 min. 24 Sahane Sokak, Balik Pasaj. Services Sun 12noon. Open daily 8am–5pm.*

⑨ ★ **Avropa Pasaj.** I try not to be distracted by the passageway's grubby glass ceiling, instead looking up above the shop entrances to the small black statues of angels lining what was the original exterior. This tiny arcade is the place to browse for antiques—or more precisely ephemera. The upper floor's renovations are set to be complete in early 2009, which will give you a chance to walk upstairs for a better view of the pasaj. 🕘 *15 min. Off Sahne Sok. Most stores open daily 10am–7pm.*

⑩ ★★ **Galatasaray Lisesi.** A massive landmark, its gate and pillars being my favorite Beyoğlu meeting-point, this school was established in the 15th century, when Sultan Beyazit II (1447–1513) responded to an old man's wish to build a school for educating 'promising young men' (see bullet ⑪). Fast forward to the late 19th century when Sultan Abdulaziz acquired the help of Napoleon III in transforming the school to the contemporary French lycée system, a huge influence on modernizing Ottoman Turkey. Since 1992, it has been part of Galatasaray University, co-educational, and entrance exams required, even at primary level. Visitors are allowed to enter the grounds (9am–5pm) or just peer through the ornate gilded gates. 🕘 *15 min. Istiklal Caddesi.*

⑪ ★ **Gülbaba's Tomb.** Take a 10-minute detour down Yeniçarşi Caddesi to see the little-known tomb of the man who inspired the Lisesi (see above); a humble reminder of a promise kept by Sultan Beyazit. The neighborhood is old and a little scruffy, but the grave — the only one there—is well kept, often tended by the local children, and with an adjacent little park. You'll be one of the few visitors to make it here! 🕒 ***10 min. Gül Baba Sokaği.***

⑫ ★★ **Misir Apartmani.** The white six-storey apartment block built in 1920 by Hovzep Aznavur, a prominent Armenian architect who also built St Stephen of the Bulgar's (see p 29), is one of my favorite Istiklal buildings, representing the old Pera with a huge facelift. Take the lift to the top floor and walk down, popping into the small private art galleries inside (see *Modern Istanbul* p 28 for more details) or lunch in the stylish **360 Istanbul** on the top floor (see *Best Nightlife p 117*). This was the winter residence of Abbas Halim Pasha, son of an Egyptian prince (Misir means Egypt). Later converted into apartments and office space, it was recently converted once again into modern apartments and given a new lease of life. 🕒 ***30–60 min. 163 Istiklal Caddesi.***

⑬ ★ **St Antoin di Padua.** This one is easy to miss—through a triple-arched gateway and down a set of steps. The huge neo-Gothic Catholic church, built in 1913, replaces the original one here from 1725, its interior dominated by a statue of Christ on the cross suspended from the ceiling, sculpted by Italian Luigi Bresciani. The exterior with leafy courtyard is delightful, with circular stained-glass windows, and flower-pots up on the entrance archway's ledges, originally part of apartments built as a source of income for the church. The statue of Pope John XXIII, who served the Istanbul Catholic community 1935–1944, was unveiled by Pope Benedict XVI on his historic trip to Istanbul in 2006. 🕒 ***15 min. Istiklal Caddesi. Open daily 8am–7.30pm.***

⑭ ★ **Santa Maria Draperis.** Like St Antoin di Padua (see above) this has an entrance hidden from view, from the days when it was forbidden for churches to have visible spires. This Franciscan church dating back to 1789 has a gorgeous bell tower, visible from the courtyard. 🕒 ***15 min. 215 Istiklal Cad; daily 10am–12pm and 2–6pm. Sun and Tues 2–6pm.***

Pope John XXIII welcomes worshippers to St Antoin di Padua.

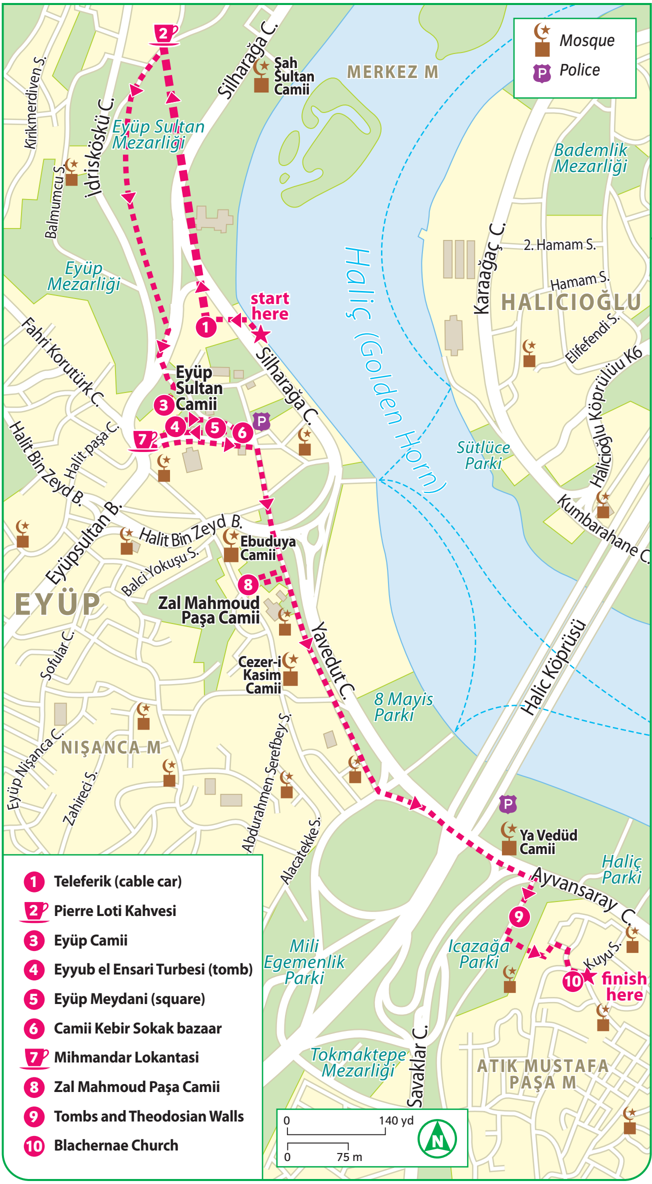
Santa Maria Draperis, hidden from view.

15 **kids** ★ **Markiz Patisserie.** Now called Robert's Coffee (and originally Lebon Pastanesi from 1850) this was once the epitome of bohemian Pera, cake venue of choice for the city's elite—including young author Orhan Pamuk. The huge art nouveau tile panels by French artist J.A. Arnoux once depicted the four seasons, although only Spring and Autumn remain. ***172A Istiklal Cad.* ☎ *0212 252 2701. $.***

⑯ **kids** ★★ **Galata Mevlevihanesi Müzesi.** Due to reopen late 2008 after major restoration, the museum housed in the 1491 *tekke* (lodge) built for the Mevlevi (Whirling Dervishes) contains traditional musical instruments, illuminated Qurans and costumes. Don't miss the complex's serene graveyard where many of the lodge's Sufis are buried, the tomb of Galipdede, the revered 17th-century Sufi poet, and the ornate fountain of Hasan Ağa (1649). This was (and plans to continue after reopening) the venue of the Dervishes performing their famous *sema* ceremony, a trancelike 'whirling' meditation which brings them close to God. Scheduled to be every Sun 5pm; phone to check. 🕒 ***30 min. 15 Galip Dede Caddesi, Tünel.* ☎ *0212 245 4141. Open Wed–Mon 9am–4.30pm.***

Ornate entrance to newly-restored Galata Mevlevihanesi.

Eyüp Sacred Sites


Mosque
Police
MERKEZ M
Şah Sultan Camii
Silharağa C.
İdrisköşkü C.
Kirikmerdiven S.
Balmumcu S.
Eyüp Sultan Mezarliği
Eyüp Mezarliği
start here
Haliç (Golden Horn)
Bademlik Mezarliği
Karaağaç C.
2. Hamam S.
Hamam S.
HALICIOĞLU
Elifefendi S.
Halıcıoğlu Köprülüu K6
Sütlüce Parki
Kumbarahane C.
Fahri Korutürk C.
Eyüp Sultan Camii
Halit paşa C.
Halit Bin Zeyd B.
Eyüpsultan B.
Balci Yokuşu S.
Ebuduya Camii
EYÜP
Zal Mahmoud Paşa Camii
Yavedut C.
Cezer-i Kasim Camii
Sofular C.
8 Mayis Parki
Haliç Köprüsü
NIŞANCA M
Eyüp Nişanca C.
Zahireci S.
Abdurahmen Şerefbey S.
Alacatekke S.
Ya Vedüd Camii
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Kuyu S.
Icazağa Parki
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Mili Egemenlik Parki
Tokmaktepe Mezarliği
Savaklar C.
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1. Teleferik (cable car)
2. Pierre Loti Kahvesi
3. Eyüp Camii
4. Eyyub el Ensari Turbesi (tomb)
5. Eyüp Meydani (square)
6. Camii Kebir Sokak bazaar
7. Mihmandar Lokantasi
8. Zal Mahmoud Paşa Camii
9. Tombs and Theodosian Walls
10. Blachernae Church

Join religious pilgrims in Eyüp, located beyond the city walls overlooking the Golden Horn and smartened up in recent years. It's best known for the religious pilgrimage site of Eyyub-el-Ensar tomb and the Pierre Loti Kahvesi (café) at the top of Eyüb Cemetery. On Fridays and weekends, look out for small boys in white satin costumes, ready (or not?) for their circumcision ceremony (*sünnet*). Although I suggest ending your tour at Ayvansaray, if you're here on a Friday morning you could reverse the order to see the Mehter band, follow the parade to Eyüp Meydani. **START: Bus 55T from Taksim or 99 from Eminönü to Eyüp.**

① **kids** ★ **Teleferik (cable car).** Completed in 2006, the three-minute cable-car ride sweeps up Pierre Loti Hill through the huge Eyüp Cemetery. The half-hour uphill walk is wonderful, so choose this option if you have neither the time nor inclination for the hike. If you walk down, take a closer look at the Ottoman-era gravestones in the cemetery. The *teleferik* gets busy at weekends. 🕘 *30–60 min. Running daily 8am–10pm; 1 YTL.*

2 **kids** ★★★ **Pierre Loti Kahvesi.** Named after the pining Turkophile French novelist who penned *Aziyade* in 1879 about his lover, this café has Golden Horn views and a shady terrace, one of Istanbul's best. *Balmumcu Sok, Gümüşsuyu Cad.* ☎ *0212 581 2696. $.*

③ ★ **kids** **Eyüp Camii.** The mosque you see today, built in 1880, replaces the first imperial mosque, built by Mehmet II in 1458 after the Fall of Constantinople. Its vast courtyard was site of the Ottoman Girding of the Sword of Osman, the enthronement rite where the sword of 13th-century leader Osman Gazi was passed on. In doing so, the local people watched the ceremony and accepted that the ruler had possession of the city. 🕘 *15 min. Eyüp Meydani. Open daily dawn–nightfall.*

Shade, view and a glass of tea at Pierre Loti Kahvesi.

④ ★★ **Eyyub el Ensari Turbesi (tomb).** Adjacent to the mosque, this shrine is one of Islam's holiest sites. Standard-bearer and companion of the Prophet Mohammed, Eyüp Sultan (as he was later known) was killed in the 7th century during battle and buried on the city's outskirts. Before conquering the city in 1453, Mehmet II rediscovered Eyüp's grave and built a shrine and mosque. The tomb still attracts many pilgrims, especially on Fridays, and non-Muslims are welcome wearing modest clothing (see *Savvy*

Dazzling tiles outside the tomb.

Traveler Clothing p 166). Inside, vivid blue Iznik tiles in Ottoman Baroque style contrast with the silver sarcophagus. Look out for the footprint of Mohammed in marble stone, framed in silver embedded in the tomb's wall. 🕒 ***15 min. Eyüp Meydani. Open daily 9am–5pm; free.***

⑤ **kids** ★★ **Eyüp Meydani (square).** Take a breather to people-watch in this enthralling public square, adjacent to **Eyyub el Ensari Turbesi** and one of my favorites. During weekends, it's time to watch family groups gather for photographs, along with their small sons decked out in satin *sünnet* (circumcision) suits. These lads—usually aged between four and eight—seemingly have no fear of their impending op, but love the attention. This is also the venue for the Friday Mehter band performance (see bullet ⑧). 🕒 ***15–30 min.***

⑥ **kids** ★★ **Camii Kebir Sokak bazaar.** This great bazaar lines both sides of the pedestrianized street in front of the mosque, catering predominantly for religious visitors. Multi-colored headscarves swirl in the breeze, copies of the Koran are piled at the stalls, jewelry and trinkets add a touch of glamor and a crackly cassette player usually blasts out Koranic or musical recitals. 🕒 ***30 min. Camii Kebir Sok. Open daily 9am–6pm.***

⑦ **kids** ★ **Mihmandar Lokantasi.** A cut above your average *lokanta* (simple restaurant), this has outdoor seating near the fountain, and serves up good kebabs and mezes. ***Kalenderhane Cad, Eyüp Bulvari.*** ☎ ***0212 612 5998. $$.***

⑧ **kids** ★★ **Zal Mahmoud Paşa Camii (mosque).** Few visitors make it to this dark-stone mosque complex, built by Sinan (see p 11) in 1571, also containing the tomb of Zal Mahmoud Paşa, Süleyman I's teacher. Mahmoud, a servant, was in love with Süleyman's sister but stood no chance, until he strangled Süleyman's son to thwart an uprising. Mahmoud was rewarded with the title 'Zal' (hero)—and marriage. Inside the courtyard a toy-making workshop, recently established by the European Union, attempts to revive the craft famous in Eyüp since the 17th century. I love Friday mornings when the local Mehter band (see *Istanbul with Kids*

Religious books and headscarves fill the bazaar.

Pierre Loti vs Eyüp Sultan

In 2007, a row over a name opened a can of worms: The hillside topped by Pierre Loti Kahvesi is known as Pierre Loti Heights, but the mayor of Eyüp wanted it changed to Eyüp Sultan Heights, after the sacred man (see bullet ⑤), so he put up a new sign at the Teleferik. Local opinion in this conservative enclave divided along secular and religious lines, between those saying Pierre Loti was part of the city's cultural history, and others feeling that Eyüp Sultan was in keeping with Turkish history. The sign has since been changed back, and all seems to be calm – for now.

p 40) start rehearsing at 10am before changing into full Ottoman regalia to parade down Feshane Caddesi. Follow the band to Eyüp Meydani for a one-hour performance in front of appreciative locals. 🕘 *15–30 min. 36 Feshane Caddesi.*

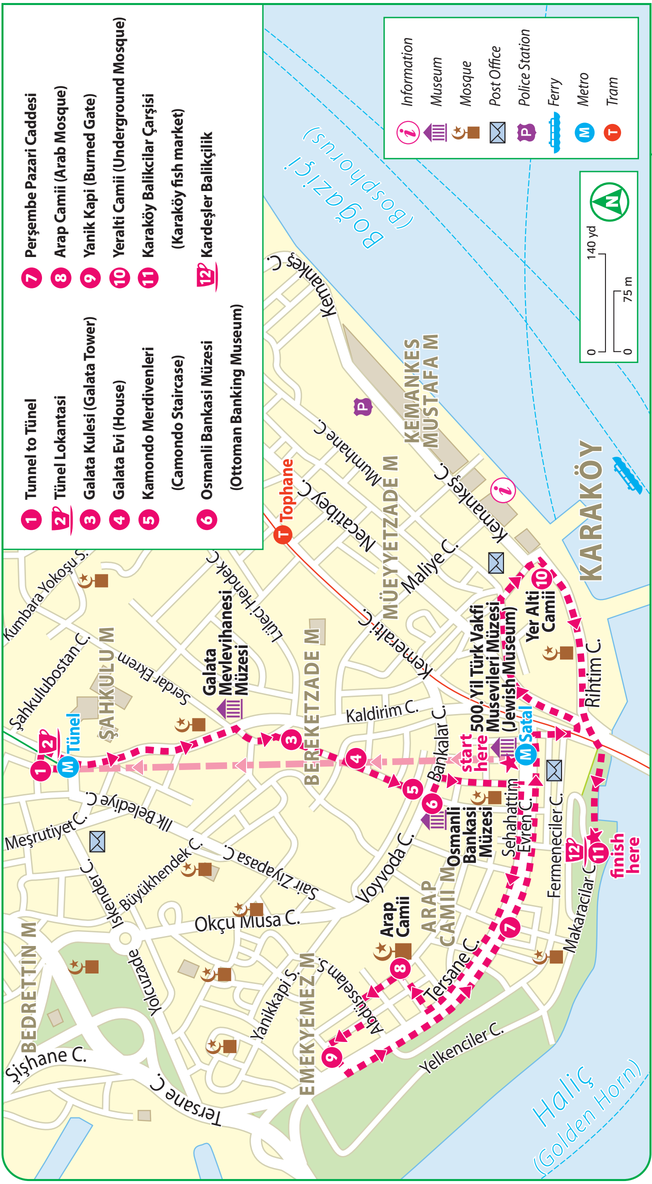
⑨ ★ **Tombs and Theodosian Walls.** From Zal Mahmoud Paşa mosque, walk south under the Haliç Bridge down Ayvansaray Caddesi, past the old palace walls on the right. Enter the grounds of Haci Husrev Mescidi, a small mosque, and take the main gates on the left. Walk though the gorgeous rose-gardens and past a tomb, then on the left ascend the steps taking you along Ayvansaray's old walls, built by Theodosius II in 412 AD to seal Constantinople against invasion. Scramble to the top for views over this traditional area – although the wooden houses might well be spruced up in the future. 🕘 *30 min.*

⑩ ★ **Blachernae Church.** After descending the city walls, walk down Toklu Ibrahim Sokak and follow Kafesci Yumni Sokagi to the left. You'll see the secluded Blachernae Church (erratic opening hours; try tagging along with a tour group). Originally built in 451AD and once a venerated Byzantine church, this was restored and rebuilt several times. The church today houses the Blachernae *ayazma* (sacred spring) thought to have healing powers. These waters dripped into a reservoir behind the building, accumulated into a large pool and then dripped from holes in the hands of a marble relief of the Virgin Mary; the relief was replaced after breakage in 1960. Byzantine times saw emperors plunge three times into the pool. These days the holy water is poured for the Greek Orthodox worshippers to drink. Services are held every Fri at 9.30am. 🕘 *15 min. Ayvansaray Kuyusu Sokagi, off Mustafa Paşa Bostani Sok. Open 8am–5pm; services Fri 9.30am.*

Walk through the old Ayvansaray streets.

Tünel to **Karaköy**

1. Tunnel to Tünel
2. Tünel Lokantasi
3. Galata Kulesi (Galata Tower)
4. Galata Evi (House)
5. Kamondo Merdivenleri (Camondo Staircase)
6. Osmanli Bankasi Müzesi (Ottoman Banking Museum)
7. Perşembe Pazari Caddesi
8. Arap Camii (Arab Mosque)
9. Yanik Kapi (Burned Gate)
10. Yeralti Camii (Underground Mosque)
11. Karaköy Balikcilar Çarşisi (Karaköy fish market)
12. Kardeşler Balikçilik


Boğaziçi
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(Golden Horn)
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KEMANKES MUSTAFA M
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BEREKETZADE M
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BEDRETTİN M
EMEKYEMEZ M
ARAP CAMII M
Tophane
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start here
finish here
Galata Mevlevihanesi Müzesi
500. Yil Türk Vakfi Musevileri Müzesi (Jewish Museum)
Yer Alti Camii
Osmanli Bankasi Müzesi
Arap Camii
Kemankeş C.
Mumhane C.
Necatibey C.
Maliye C.
Kemeraltı C.
Kaldirim C.
Bankalar C.
Rihtim C.
Lüleci Hendek C.
Serdar Ekrem
Kumbara Yokoşu S.
Şahkulubostan C.
Meşrutiyet C.
İlk Belediye C.
Büyükhendek C.
Şair Ziyapaşa C.
Okçu Musa C.
Voyvoda C.
Iskender C.
Yolcuzade
Yanikkapi S.
Abdüsselam S.
Tersane C.
Sehahattim Evren C.
Fermeneciler C.
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The Galata area, part of Beyoğlu in today's bohemian Istanbul, was the epitome of European culture in the 19th century, and heart of the banking area of the (then sinking) Ottoman Empire. The newly gentrified—and expensive—housing is unrecognizable from my first visit 20 years ago, when this was a no-go area at night. These days it offers steep cobbled streets and traditional workshops—plus your best views of Istanbul. **START: Tunnel at Karaköy.**

① **kids** ★★ **Tunnel to Tünel.** Take a ride on the world's second-oldest subway system, after London, and the shortest. French engineer Eugene Henri Gavand built the 573m-long funicular in 1874 after seeing locals traipsing between Galata and Pera (from experience, it's hilly!), initially with a steam engine and gas lamps. You can see photographs of early streetcars and tramways outside Karaköy station. Start your journey from this station if you're coming from Sultanahmet or Eminönü. 🕘 *15 min. Mon–Fri 7am–9pm; Sat and Sun 7.30am–9pm. Jeton or akbil 0.90 YTL. Sebahattin Evren Cad. www.iett.gov.tr/en.*

② **kids** ★ **Tünel Lokantasi.** Although service can be erratic, I love breakfast on their roof terrace with delicious homemade bread, made with onions and herbs. *261 Istiklal Cad.* ☎ *0212 245 7025. $.*

③ **kids** ★★★ **Galata Kulesi (Galata Tower).** You've probably already climbed the tower (see *Best in One Day* p 7) for Istanbul's best panoramic views, but take a minute to visualize an unusual flight. In the late 17th century, Hazerfan Ahmet Çelebi (1609–1640) was one of the world's first aviators, using artificial wings to power his flight as he leapt off the tower over the Bosphorus; apparently he was inspired by Leonardo da Vinci's studies of birds in flight (see p 11).

④ ★ **Galata Evi (House).** Five minutes walk from the tower and converted by architects Mete and Nadire Göktuğ in the 1990s into a Georgian/Russian restaurant, this was originally an early 20th-century British jail, one of several major political powers with prisons here. Have a drink and poke around its tiny dining areas and terrace, and try and spot the prisoners' graffiti. Opposite, the mid-19th-century **Dominican Church of SS Peter and Paul** built by the Fossati Brothers is hidden behind high walls, as instructed by the Ottomans that churches must be out of sight. 🕘 *15–30 min. 61 Galata Kulesi Sok.* ☎ *0212 245 1861 (restaurant res.). www.thegalatahouse.com.*

Icon in the courtyard of Dominican Church of SS Peter and Paul.

⑤ ★★ **Kamondo Merdivenleri (Camondo Staircase).** Built in 1860 by Avram Camondo, head of the powerful Jewish banking family (see *Special Interest,* p 34) this curvaceous double staircase led from the main banking street to his family home on Felek Sokak. Built just after his son Moise was born, its hexagonal design was arranged so that if a child slipped, there wasn't far to fall. It was later used by his children to get to school, and for him to go to the bank. You might recognize the staircase from Henri Cartier-Bresson's photograph taken during his 1964 Istanbul trip. 🕘 *10 min. See p 36 for details.*

⑥ **kids** ★★ **Osmanli Bankasi Müzesi (Ottoman Banking Museum).** A real gem even if your eyes glaze over at the thought of finance. Near the bottom of the Camondo Staircase, and housed in the former Ottoman bank HQ (next to the Central Bank of Turkey), this was Constantinople's first 'modern' bank. The street today still has many banks, in an imposing row of mainly early 20th-century houses. The exhibition kicks off with Queen Victoria's Royal charter, authorizing the foundation of the Imperial Ottoman Bank in 1856 for a mere £500,000. Venture into the original vaults with bundles of banknotes from 1875. Thought the 2009 US and UK credit crunch was bad? Nothing like the financial crisis during the 1875–1881 Russo-Ottoman war, judging by original loan contracts between the bank and Ottoman government. It's great to see that even sultans had to follow the same banking rules as mere mortals; even the harem eunuchs had savings and loans here. Walk upstairs to the temporary galleries to look down onto the present-day banking hall. 🕘 *1 hr. 35–37 Voyvoda Cad.* ☎ *0212 334 2270. www.obmuseum.com. 3 YTL. Open daily 10am–6pm. Tram: Karaköy.*

⑦ ★ **Perşembe Pazari Caddesi.** One of the area's busiest and most charming streets, this is chock-full of *hans*, 18th-century merchants' houses. On the corner of Bakir Sokak is Genoese **Saksi Han,** where you can peep at the arched ceilings in the workshops. Look out for **Ceneviz** (Turkish for Genoan) **Han** at #17, and **Serpus Han,** then left up Yeni Camii Çeşme Sokak at the *çeşme* (water fountain) with stone Ottoman inscriptions. 🕘 *15 min.*

⑧ ★ **Arap Camii (Arab Mosque).** Approach from Tersane Caddesi for a dramatic first glimpse: The mosque's deep red minaret was once the bell-tower of the church, built by the Genoese in early Italian Gothic architectural style. Mehmet II turned it into the red-walled Galata Camii in the 1470s, later known as Arap Camii when Beyazid II assigned it to Moors (Muslims from the Spanish region) fleeing the 15th-century Spanish Inquisition. Over the years, minor repairs and alterations after fires include a new a wooden gallery. I love its relaxing courtyard in the middle of this hectic area, with benches surrounding the

Once the Turkish Bank HQ, now a museum.

Football flag flutters in Galata's traditional banking area.

şadirvan (ablutions fountain). 🕘 *15 min. 15 Futuhat Sok. Open dawn to dusk.*

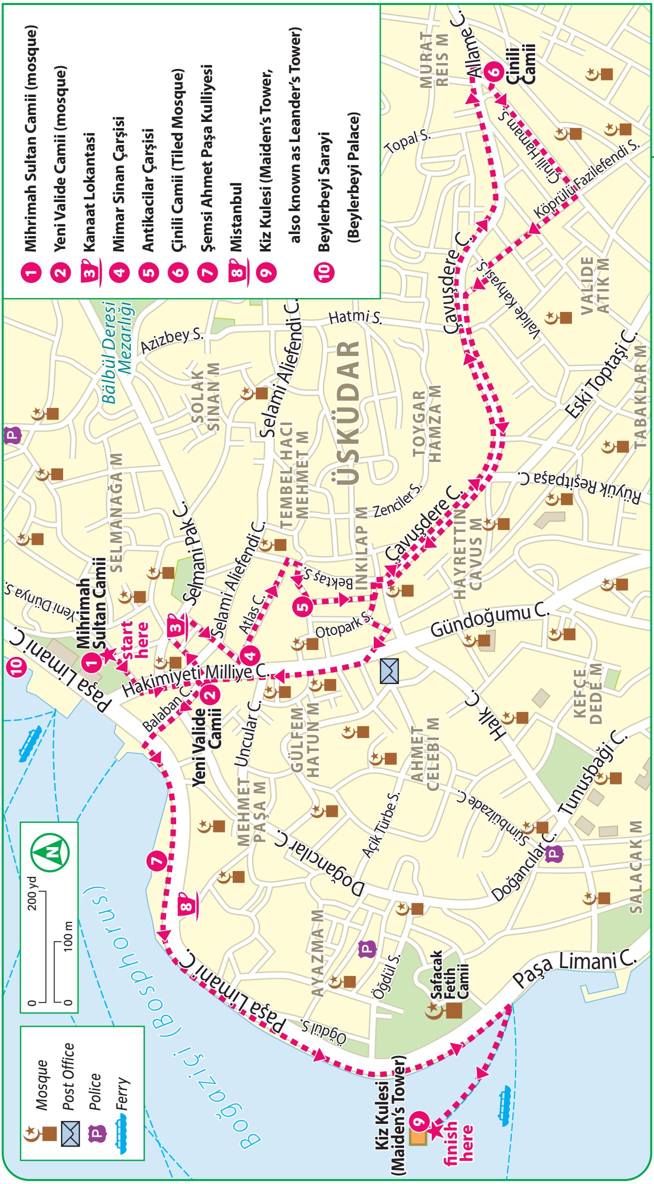
9 ★ **Yanik Kapi (Burned Gate).** This is the only remaining gate of the city walls dating back to Genoese times. Look above the archway to the plaque with St George's cross, the symbol of Genoa, now under a casing so unfortunately difficult to see. 🕘 *10 min.*

10 ★ **Yeralti Camii (Underground Mosque).** No neck-ache from gazing up at ceilings here, with 54 sturdy pillars supporting the low vaulted ceiling. The mosque is at the base of a tower, originally built in the sixth century to guard the entrance of the Haliç (Golden Horn), and location of one end of the enormous chain blocking the waterway (which you can see a part of in the Military Museum, see p 44). The tower was used as warehouse, dungeon, and from the 18th century, a mosque. Very little is visible from the street and once inside, its bulky pillars make it hard to judge its immense size. Inside are tombs of Sufyan bin Uyeyne, Amr bin As and Vehb bin Hüşeyre, martyrs and companions of Prophet Mohammed. 🕘 *20 min. Kemankeş Cad. Open daily 9am–nightfall. Tram: Karaköy.*

11 ★ **Karaköy Balikcilar Çarşisi (Karaköy fish market).** The spruced-up waterfront has a popular fish market (red and exposed gills mean the freshest) plus wooden stools and tables and simple shacks cooking up local fish, with optimistic cats slinking around. With a couple of juice barrows squeezing fresh oranges, this makes an interesting alternative snack to the boats at Eminönü (see p 45) plus a better view of the Old City skyline. 🕘 *20 min.*

12 **kids** ★ **Kardeşler Balikçilik.** Enjoy freshly grilled fish with salad and bread at wooden rickety tables, staying open late on warm summer evenings. *21 Fermeneciler Cad, Kardeşim Sok.* ☎ *0212 293 8606. $.*

Üsküdar



1. Mihrimah Sultan Camii (mosque)
2. Yeni Valide Camii (mosque)
3. Kanaat Lokantasi
4. Mimar Sinan Çarşisi
5. Antikacilar Çarşisi
6. Çinili Camii (Tiled Mosque)
7. Şemsi Ahmet Paşa Kulliyesi
8. Mistanbul
9. Kiz Kulesi (Maiden's Tower, also known as Leander's Tower)
10. Beylerbeyi Sarayi (Beylerbeyi Palace)

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Yeni Valide Camii
Kiz Kulesi (Maiden's Tower)
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Safacak Fetih Camii
Paşa Limani C.
Hakimiyeti Milliye C.
Balaban C.
Uncular C.
Doğancilar C.
Selmani Pak C.
Selami Aliefendi C.
Atlas C.
Bektaş S.
Otopark S.
Çavuşdere C.
Gündoğumu C.
Halk C.
Tunusbaği C.
Eski Toptaşi C.
Büyük Reşitpaşa C.
Valide Kahyasi S.
Köprülü Fazilefendi S.
Çinili Hamam S.
Allame C.
Topal S.
Hatmi S.
Azizbey S.
Zenciler S.
Açik Türbe S.
Sümbülzade C.
Öğdül S.
Yeni Dünya S.
Bülbül Deresi Mezarliği
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SOLAK SINAN M
TEMBEL HACI MEHMET M
INKILAP M
TOYGAR HAMZA M
MURAT REIS M
VALIDE ATIK M
TABAKLAR M
HAYRETTIN ÇAVUŞ M
KEFÇE DEDE M
AHMET ÇELEBI M
GÜLFEM HATUN M
MEHMET PAŞA M
AYAZMA M
SALACAK M

Most of Istanbul's Asian side surprises first-time visitors, a modern residential hub containing neither the opulent architecture nor modern style of the European side. But of those areas easily accessible, Üsküdar is a charming district, easily accessed by ferry and chock-full of historical mosques. A visit gives you the chance to explore the streets of a quiet everyday neighborhood.

START: Ferry from Eminönü or Karaköy to Üsküdar.

① ★★ **Mihrimah Sultan Camii (mosque).** The first thing you'll see from the ferry pier—in fact on your approaching ferry—is the mosque built by Sinan in 1548. Also known as Iskele Camii, it was built for Süleyman I in memory of his favorite daughter, on a raised platform to protect it from the water. Because of lack of space for a central courtyard, Sinan used a protruding roof to cover the *şadirvan* (ablutions fountain). The complex had the usual *hamam*, *medrese* and hospital—the latter of which is now a state-of-the-art health center. Outside, take a closer look at the stunning rococo Ahmed III fountain, an architectural masterpiece with calligraphy, masonry and art, seemingly in the midst of a traffic island. 🕘 *20 min.*

Mihrimah Sultan Camii, named after Süleyman's daughter.

② ★ **Yeni Valide Camii (mosque).** On the south side of a large plaza, this mosque was built for Gülnuş Emetullah Valide Sultan, mother of Sultans Mustafa II and Ahmet III, who was buried in 1716 in the adjacent tomb. I love this tomb, about as far removed from the glamorous tomb of Süleyman's wife Roxelana as you could imagine: In a simple open stone tomb, the cover is an iron domed roof, rather like a birdcage, and open to the elements. You can peer from the street into the tiny plot, overgrown with roses. The adjacent stone kiosk, part of the original walls, is an official seller of gorgeous local olive oil and honey, sold in huge quantities. 🕘 *20 min. Uncular Cad.*

③ **kids** ★★ **Kanaat Lokantasi.** A fabulous choice for lunch, this has been a locals' favorite since 1933, with hearty traditional dishes like *tandir* (tandoori) lamb and döner kebab with tomatoes and butter. Go to the kitchen area to choose hot dishes as the chef lays them out. *25 Salmanipak Cad.* ☎ *0216 553 3791. $.*

④ ★ **Mimar Sinan Çarşisi.** Although the inside of this market doesn't offer much of a shopping experience, the building is charming, located in a quiet square where locals gather on benches around the central fountain. (It's my favorite Üsküdar relaxing spot.) Sinan originally built this in 1583 as the *hamam* of the Mihrimah Sultan complex. With two separate baths, for men and women, this was ruined over time and impossible to reconstruct. In the 1960s it was restored as a covered bazaar by Mehmet Bozkurt. 🕒 *15 min. Hakimiyet-I Milliye Cad. Open daily 9am–6pm.*

⑤ **kids** ★★ **Antikacilar Çarşisi.** You don't have to be an antique lover to enjoy browsing here, though it helps. Once you find it (the corner of Büyük Hamam and Bulgurlu Mescit Sokak; not many locals know about it!) enjoy its two levels of dusty antiques in around 40 stores, including Ottoman carved wooden doors (immense!), tables, brassware, and lighting. Most of the goodies on show are between 70 and140 years old. Walk down to the workshops in the basement to see restoration of some of the older items. A real gem. 🕒 *30 min. 32 Buyük Hamam Sok. Open daily 10am–7pm.*

⑥ ★★ **Çinili Camii (Tiled Mosque).** If you ever wondered what is the opposite of praying in huge, ornate mosques like Süleymaniye, then this is it. A 15-minute uphill walk up Cavuşdere Caddesi for about 15 minutes, to a quiet residential area, this tiny ornate mosque is the real neighborhood experience. Few people make it up here so it may not be open, but ask around and the caretaker may appear with the key (tip appreciated). Adorned with Iznik tiles and ornate chandelier, ask him to show you upstairs. Dating back to 1640, it was built under Mahpeyker Kösem, a wily one who did what she could to achieve her political gains, especially after the death of her husband Sultan Ahmed I. 🕒 *20 min. Cinili Mescit Sok. Open prayer times.*

⑦ ★★ **Şemsi Ahmet Paşa Kulliyesi.** Enjoy the waterfront setting of this little mosque, with single dome and minaret (currently under major renovation). Designed by Sinan for Şemsi Paşa in 1580, its *medrese* was refurbished into a library in 1953. The pier attracts a smattering of local fishermen, admiring the view over to the European side of Istanbul. 🕒 *15 min. Sahil Yolu.*

⑧ **kids** ★ **Mistanbul.** Try and get a window seat for a waterfront view while you down a coffee and all-day Turkish breakfast, or *menemen* (egg dish). Popular with courting couples and stylish Üsküdar folk, this is a perfect location away from the traffic. *10 Şemsi Paşa Cad.* ☎ *0216 334 6676. $.*

Mimar Sinan Çarşisi, better out than in.

Kiz Kulesi, wrapped in legend and movie kudos.

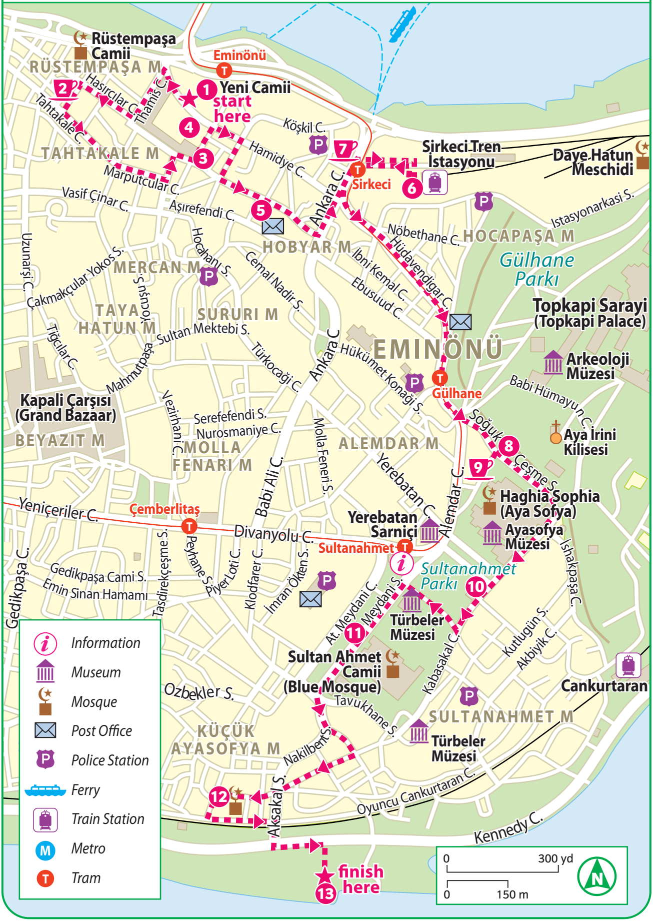
⑨ **kids** ★ **Kiz Kulesi (Maiden's Tower, also known as Leander's Tower).** It's a pleasant waterfront walk to the little ferry shuttling over to the tower. Used as a lighthouse for centuries and given an interior facelift in 1998, legend goes that a sultan built the tower to confine his daughter from a deadly serpent's bite, as predicted by a soothsayer. Her imprisonment was to no avail as the snake arrived in a basket of fruit and she died in her father's arms. More recently, the iconic tower featured in the James Bond 1999 movie *The World is Not Enough*. You might find it hard to get a viewing point on the gallery during busy weekends, but this makes a fun trip and the seats at the bottom of the tower are a relaxing spot. Bypass its restaurant in favor of local places to eat. 🕒 *1 hr. Ferries depart Mon–Fri 12.30–7pm; Sat and Sun 9.15am–7pm; return ticket 5 YTL.*

⑩ **kids** ★ **Beylerbeyi Sarayi (Beylerbeyi Palace).** Walk the 4km north to the waterfront palace or take the bus from Üsküdar pier. Almost under the mighty Bosphorus Bridge, this late 19th-century palace was built by Sarkis Balyan for Sultan Abdülaziz at the decline of the Ottoman Empire. Enjoy the lush grounds with strange-shaped Harem Yali Köşkü pavilion, then take a tour of the interior. My favorite room is the Blue Hall, with one of the world's largest Harike (luxurious silk) carpets, and Arabic poems inscribed on the ceilings. Look out also for chairs made by Sultan Abdulhamid—imprisoned here for six years to his death—and the meeting room for the Sultan's mother adorned in red, her favorite color. 🕒 *1 hr. Abdullah Aga Cad.* ☎ *0216 321 932021. www.millisaraylar.gov.tr. Open Tue–Wed and Fri–Sun; Oct–Feb 9.30am–4pm; Mar–Sep 9.30am–5pm. Adult 8 YTL, conc 3 YTL inc guided tour. Bus: 15 from Üsküdar.*

Waterfront walk to Beylerbeyi Sarayi.

Eminönü to **Sultanahmet**

① Yeni Camii (New Mosque)
2 Café Istanbul Kahvehanesi
③ Hatice Turhan Valide Sultan turbe (Tomb of Hatice Turhan)
④ Misir Çarşisi (Egyptian Bazaar)
⑤ Sirkeci PTT (Central Post Office) & Müzesi (museum)
⑥ Sirkeci Gari (station) & Müzesi (museum)
7 Konyali
⑧ Soğukçeşme Sokak
9 Caferağa Medresesi
⑩ Haseki Hürrem Hamami (Baths of Roxelana)
⑪ At Meydani (Hippodrome)
⑫ Küçük Ayasofya Camii (mosque)
⑬ Sarayburnu (Seraglio Point)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Hüdavendigar C.
Ebusuud C.
Topkapi Sarayi (Topkapi Palace)
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Yocuşu S.
SURURI M
Sultan Mektebi S.
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Kapali Çarşısı (Grand Bazaar)
Vezirhani C.
Serefendi S.
Nurosmaniye C.
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MOLLA FENARI M
ALEMDAR M
Babi Ali C.
Yerebatan C.
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Kutlugün S.
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Entering the heart of the Old City, you've probably visited the area's best palaces, museums and mosques. This walk enables you to experience some of its off-the-beaten-track beauty rather than grandeur, reflecting everyday life, past and present, like markets, post offices and stations. Kick off at Eminönü, one of my favorite Old City districts. **START: Metro or bus to Eminönü.**

① **kids** ★★ **Yeni Camii (New Mosque).** I always notice that although Yeni Camii is a massive landmark, its cupola and minarets dominating the Old City skyline, few visitors actually enter. Walk up the steps past warbling pigeons being chased by squealing kids to enter the vast courtyard, with a marble ablutions fountain in the centre. Commissioned by Valide Safiye Sultan, mother of Mehmet III, work began in 1597, forcing out many residents from the dense Jewish neighborhood. Thought your construction work went on longer than expected? This one certainly did, with leaks, funding problems, embezzlement and death of the sultan, which meant the mosque wasn't finished until 1663, by then under Turhan Hatice Sultan, mother of Mehmet IV. This was part of a huge tradition of architectural patronage by *valides* (Ottoman queen mothers). Its interior is dominated by its blue and turquoise tiles and the multi-domed ceiling. As with all working mosques, it's best to avoid the five daily prayer-times. 🕘 *20 min. Eminönü Meydani. Open daily dawn–dusk.*

2 **kids** ★ **Café Istanbul Kahvehanesi.** The recently converted 500-year-old Tahtakale hamam has actually been altered very little. After entering its huge wooden doors, settle back for Turkish coffee and cakes while admiring its the marble surrounds and vaulted ceiling. *Tahtakale Hamam Çarşisi, 329 Uzuncarsi Cad, Eminönü.* ☎ *0212 514 4042. $.*

Preparing for prayers at Yeni Camii.

③ ★ **Hatice Turhan Valide Sultan turbe (Tomb of Hatice Turhan).** It might be morbid, but I love sultans' tombs, with snippets of information about the palace families rarely seen in public places. (Where possible, go around the back of the tombs, and you may find summaries written in English.) Here, opposite the mosque, the tomb of Turhan Hatice and many of the Sultans' children make eye-popping reading today: Turhan Hatice was probably of Russian descent, captured in raids by Tatars, and entered the harem age 12. Taken under the wing of Kösem Valide Sultan, mother of Sultan Ibrahim, she was educated and then 'presented' as a concubine to her son, where she duly gave birth to Mehmet IV. A prominent and ambitious concubine, she was hugely

Sirkeci's historic station houses the 'Railway Museum.'

influential in the palace, and saw Yeni Camii and Misir ÇarşisI to completion. Kösem Sultan was later murdered due to a palace power struggle. 🕒 *20 min. Eminönü. Open daily 9.30am–4.30pm.*

④ **kids** ★★ **Misir Çarşisi (Egyptian Bazaar).** You've probably already loaded up with *lokum* (Turkish delight), olives, and textiles (see *Best in One Day,* p 9). Don't forget **Hasircilar Caddesi** for the best (and cheapest) dried fruit and *pul biber* (red pepper flakes). Now's a chance to explore the bazaar's less-visited, most eclectic streets: When looking towards the main entrance, head to the left and wind around the flower stalls, listen out for the cheep of budgies and even be tempted (or not) by jars of leeches, said to have myriad health benefits including curing rheumatic and arthritic problems. This is where locals buy plant seeds, mainly vegetables and herbs, either by the packet (check the sell-by date if you're buying) or loose. 🕒 *30–60 min. Eminönü. Open Mon–Sat 9am–7pm.*

⑤ **kids** ★ **Sirkeci PTT (Central Post Office) & Müzesi (museum).** From Çiçek Pazari Sokak walk straight to **Sirkeci PTT**, the late-19th-century central post office. If you need to buy a stamp, do it here just so you can admire the colored glass ceiling in the main hall. Exit the main door and look left to the huge Ottoman-era thermometer with Arabic and French scripts. Next-door, the **PTT Museum** was part of the original post office, with Morse code machines, Ottoman stamps and huge leather mailbags used when postmen traveled on horseback to make deliveries. Unfortunately there are few captions in English. As you exit, look opposite for **Vlora Han** at #20, a sturdy merchants' building with sculpted stone roses on the outside. 🕒 *30 min. PTT Müzesi, Büyük Posthanesi Cad. Mon–Fri 9am–12pm and 1.30–4pm. Free. Tram: Sirkeci.*

⑥ **kids** ★★ **Sirkeci Gari (station) & Müzesi (museum).** Although I usually enter through the main passenger entrance before boarding a train, it's far better to approach this historic station from Sirkeci Istasyon Caddesi. With great ceremony, the first trains rumbled through in 1890. Sick of the clichés 'East meets West?' Me too, but this really is accurate, as it was the last stop of the fabled Orient Express from the Ottoman Empire into Europe, so for visitors arriving from

Berlin, Vienna, and Paris, this was their first glimpse of Constantinople. Enter through the Orient Express restaurant, where travelers dined before heading west, and look for the **Museum**, a real secret find, with exhibits from the world-famous train, including the front cab and silver cutlery. There aren't many English captions, but look out for the tile stove used to heat the waiting hall in 1890, and the original weighing machine from 1930, still working. 🕘 *30 min. Museum: Sirkeci Istasyon Cad.* ☎ *0212 520 6575. www.tcdd.gov.tr. Open Tues–Sat 9am–5pm. Free.*

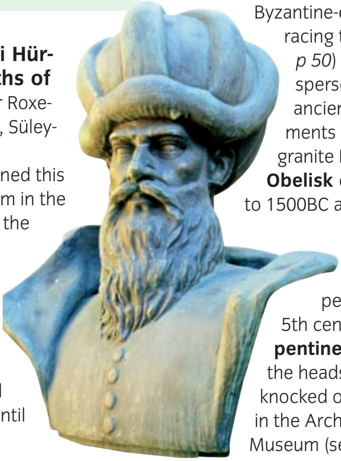
7 **kids** ★★ **Konyali.** Istanbul's famous pastry house is two minutes from the stations with syrupy cakes and *su boreği*, a pasta-type layered cheese snack. Freshly made pizzas are their latest addition. Look on the walls for signed endorsements from Mohammed Ali, Benazir Bhutto, and even Queen Elizabeth. *5 Mimar Kemalettin Cad.* ☎ *0212 527 1935. $.*

⑧ ★ **Soğukçeşme Sokak.** Twee and fake, or a decent recreation of history? This row of pastel-colored wooden-fronted houses behind Haghia Sophia (see p 7) was built after disputes between the Turkish Touring and Automobile Association (TTAA) and the local council (belediye). Starting in 1984 the TTAA tore down the existing 300-year-old rundown houses, occupied by local employees, and recreated them as accurately as possible (though perhaps with more pastel blues and pinks than the original). Most were turned into **Ayasofya Pensionlar,** a group of mid-range hotels run by the TTAA (see *Best Lodging*, p 137). Visitors often bypass the **Istanbul Kitapliği (library)**, the long two-story house with a collection of historic books on the city (some in English), further along the street. Visitors are welcome. At the top end of the street, don't miss the ornate **Ahmet Çeşme**, the Sultan Ahmet III fountain. 🕘 *20–30 min. Istanbul Kitapligi, Sogukçeşme Sokagi.* ☎ *0212 512 5730. Open Mon–Fri 10am–4.30pm.*

Elegant baths built for Roxelana, wife of Süleyman I.

9 **kids** ★★ **Caferağa Medresesi.** Craft shops now fill the original *medrese* built by Sinan, (see *Best Shopping*, p 95) with a tiny café cooking homely traditional dishes in a gorgeous courtyard. *Caferiye Sok.* ☎ *0212 513 3601. $.*

⑩ **kids** ★★ **Haseki Hürrem Hamami (Baths of Roxelana).** Built for Roxelana (Haseki Hürrem), Süleyman I's cunning wife, architect Sinan designed this double-domed hamam in the mid-16th century for the worshippers at Aya Sofya (as it was renamed) mosque. The men's and women's entrances at separate sides makes it symmetrical and elegant. In use until 1910, the building is now a government-run carpet and kilim shop. Well preserved, the good news is that entrance is free and everyone is welcome to see the original marble floors, hexagonal marble massage slabs, and domed hall. The bad news is that you'll possibly be tempted to buy a carpet. 🕒 *30 min. 2/4 Bab-I Humayun Caddesi. Tram: Sultanahmet. Map p 70.*



Mimar Sinan watches over visitors to Caferağa Medresesi

⑪ **kids** ★★ **At Meydani (Hippodrome).** This Byzantine-era chariot-racing track (see *p 50*) is interspersed with three ancient monuments in a row: the granite **Egyptian Obelisk** dates back to 1500BC and was taken from Luxor; intertwined serpents form the 5th century BC **Serpentine Column**, the heads since knocked off (one is in the Archaeology Museum (see p 14); the **Column of Porphyrogenitus**'s (named after a 10th-century emperor) bronze covering was melted down by the Crusaders to

Cool down at Kaiser Wilhelm's fountain in the Hippodrome.

موالی لیاب
رحوره مغفور
ایاصوفیه صغیر
زاویه شیخی
الشیخ محمد افندی
۱۱۸۲

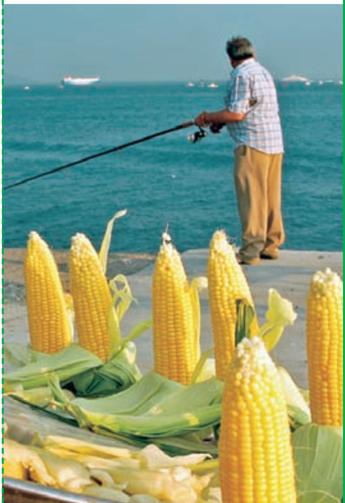
Peaceful courtyard at newly-restored Küçük Ayasofya Camii.

make coins, and is now dilapidated. Whiz forward a few centuries to the **fountain**, presented by Kaiser Wilhelm II to Sultan Abdulhamid after his visit to the city in 1898. The gold-ceilinged, eight-columned covered fountain, built in traditional German architectural style, still has water flowing from its taps. 🕒 ***30 min.*** ***At Meydani. Tram: Sultanahmet.***

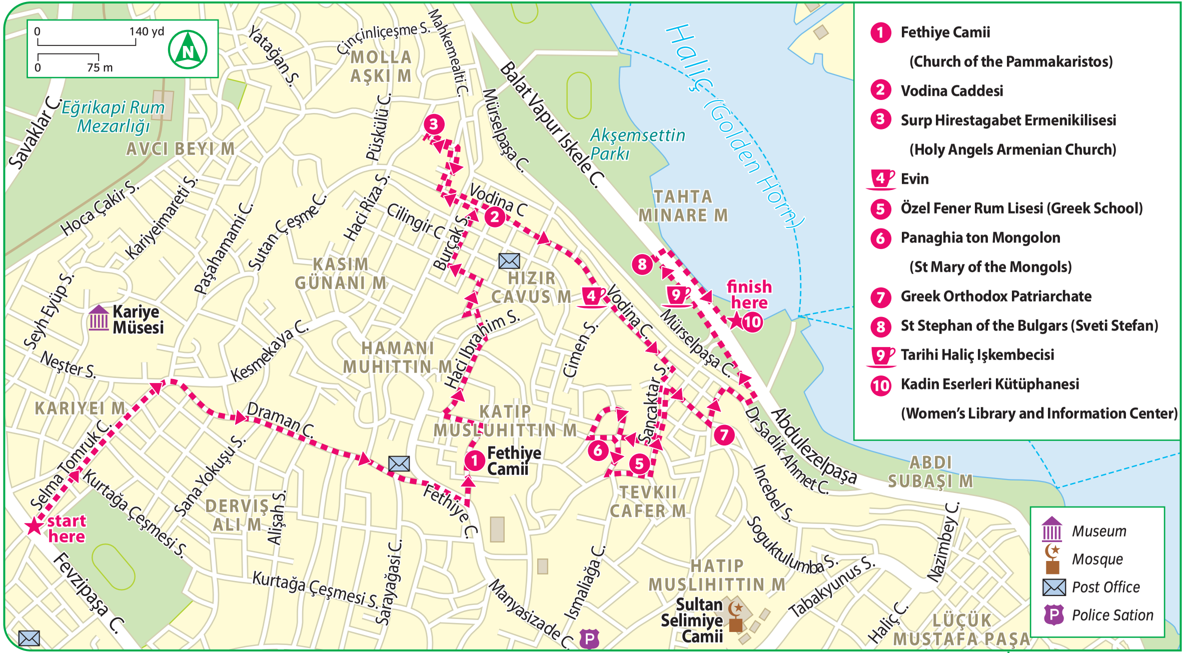
⑫ ★ **Küçük Ayasofya Camii (mosque).** Küçük Ayasofya Caddesi brings you to the rundown yet charming residential area, a world away from Sultanahmet's monuments. Follow this to the mosque, known as Küçük (little) Ayasofya but originally Church of SS Sergius and Bacchus, built by Emperor Justinian. Converted to a mosque in the late 15th century, its mosaics and frescoes are long gone, but the Greek inscription on the marble frieze inside names Justinian and his wife as founders. Renovations were completed here in 2007 although in my opinion the interior has been overdone, with marble-effect paint on the pillars attempting to look like the real thing. Walk up to the balcony to find the tiny section of original stone walls preserved behind glass, plus an area of flooring on the first floor. My personal highlight is the **çaybahçe**, the quaint tea-garden in the leafy courtyard. In the old *medrese* are minuscule artists' studios that make and sell traditional crafts like calligraphy and ceramics. 🕒 ***20–40 min. Mosque open dawn–dusk; çaybahçe open daily 10.30am–6.30pm.***

⑬ **kids** ★★ **Sarayburnu (Seraglio Point).** Fishermen on Galata Bridge are a common sight, but here's a little gem: Head back under the railway bridge to the bracing sea breeze. At sunset (my favorite time of day here) the fishermen gather and gaze onto the Bosphorus, although I feel this is more of a recreational fishing trip, judging by the number of beer bottles and deckchairs. Children will love the nearby playground, and there's always the occasional cart selling barbecued *misir* (sweetcorn). From here, you can walk back up to Sultanahmet or around the main road for a longer walk to Eminönü. 🕒 ***15–30 min. Kennedy Cad.***

Essential refreshments for fishermen at Sarayburnu.



Fener & Balat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1. **Fethiye Camii** **(Church of the Pammakaristos)**
2. **Vodina Caddesi**
3. **Surp Hirestagabet Ermenikilisesi** **(Holy Angels Armenian Church)**
4. **Evin**
5. **Özel Fener Rum Lisesi (Greek School)**
6. **Panaghia ton Mongolon** **(St Mary of the Mongols)**
7. **Greek Orthodox Patriarchate**
8. **St Stephan of the Bulgars (Sveti Stefan)**
9. **Tarihi Haliç Işkembecisi**
10. **Kadin Eserleri Kütüphanesi** **(Women's Library and Information Center)**

Hugging the Golden Horn, this area holds many of Istanbul's Christian treasures where you'll be visiting Byzantine, Greek, Bulgarian and Armenian churches. Not that it's all grandeur; a magnet for migrants from rural Turkey since the Greeks were expelled in the 1960s, the area's wooden houses on narrow cobbled lanes have fallen into despair. Good news is that you'll see patches of renovation, funded by the European Union, bringing new life into the area.

START: Bus 86 or 87 to Vefa Stadyumu (stadium).

① ★ **Fethiye Camii (Church of the Pammakaristos).** This rarely visited mosque, originally a church and now a museum, has amazingly well-preserved Byzantine frescoes and mosaics from the years it housed the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate (head of the church). Its serene portraits include the dome with Pantocreator surrounded by the prophets. Built in 1292, this has been a nunnery, seat of the Patriarchate (1456–1568), and converted to a mosque by Murat III in 1573 and renamed Fethiye (victory) to celebrate his conquests over Georgia and Azerbaijan. After conversion, the Patriarchate moved to Fener (see bullet ⑦). 🕘 *1 hr. Fethiye Kapisi, off Fethiye Cad. Tues–Sun 9.30am–4.30am. 5 YTL. From Vefa Stayumu, walk down Selma Toruk, turn right onto Draman Cad. 15-min walk (or taxi).*

② ★ **Vodina Caddesi.** This is one of my favorite Istanbul streets, laden with Fener's ramshackle charm and showcasing the neglected neighborhood's restoration. From Fethiye Kapisi, walk down Draman Çeşmesi Sokak and look out for Astarci Sokak's traditional wooden houses—if they're still there!—then down Vodina Caddesi, passing the old Greek house at the corner. This is also the area of the old Çifit Çarşisi, Jewish Market (see *Special Interest Tours* p 39). Along Leblebiciler Sokak, Agora at #20 is one of Turkey's oldest *meyhanes* hosting happy diners since 1890 (currently being renovated by a journalist friend of mine). Newly restored houses here punctuate the street otherwise filled with original buildings, like the shop selling aluminium at #17, with Byzantine arched roof inside. For a souvenir of local culture, **Balart** (36 Hizirçavus Köprü Sokak) sells pretty paintings and tiny models of Balat houses by resident artist Beyhan Gürsoy. 🕘 *30 min. Most shops open daily, 9am–7pm.*

③ ★ **Surp Hirestagabet Ermenikilisesi (Holy Angels Armenian Church).** Around the corner from Vodina Caddesi, the church and its icons have survived three fires, a miracle in itself. Dating back to Byzantine times, with the sacred spring underneath still in full

Old Greek house perched on the corner of Balat market.

flow, the Armenian community took the nondescript church in the 17th century and restored it in 1835. Also known as Mary of Wonders, every year on 16 September worshippers from all faiths come from throughout Turkey for all-night prayers, believing that the sacred spring has miraculous powers on just one congregant. It reminds me of the similar prayers and celebrations at Aya Yorgi monastery on Büyükada (see *Princes' Islands* p 150). 🕘 ***20 min. 2 Kamiş Sokaği.***

④ **kids** ★ **Evin.** Before your steep climb up to the Greek School (bullet ⑤), recharge at this bright café with savory pastries, cakes and tea, served by the owner. ***102 Vodina Cad.*** ☎ ***0212 524 8611. $.***

⑤ ★★ **Özel Fener Rum Lisesi (Greek School).** Originally named Great Patriarchal School of the Nation, today fewer than 50 students attend this immense neo-Gothic red-brick monolith, still a dramatic sight crowning the steep Fener street. What you see today was built in 1881 with bricks brought from France, yet the institution was founded in 1556 as one of the Ottoman capital's most important Greek educational institutions. One of my favorite Istanbul views is from the bottom of Sancaktar Yokuşu, with rows of washing strung across the street leading to the school – an obvious photo opportunity. When you climb the steep hill, turn the corner, keeping the school on your right to reach ⑥. 🕘 ***10 min. Sancaktar Yokuşu.***

⑥ ★★ **Panaghia ton Mongolon (St Mary of the Mongols).** An unassuming, squat church tucked behind high walls, this is famously the only Byzantine church that remained in Greek hands and, thanks to a decree by Mehmet II, never converted to a mosque. Maria, a Christian, married the Mogul Khan (leader) in the late 13th century, undoubtedly to broker better relations between the two nations. Widowed after 15 years, she returned to Constantinople and founded a monastery where she spent her remaining years. Ring the bell for the caretaker, who can show you around its small modest interior (tips appreciated), with tiny icons and shrines. He may also show you the underground passageway that led all the way to the Haghia Sophia (see p 7). 🕘 ***15 min. Tevkii Cafer Mektebi Sok. Open daily 9am–5pm.***

The famous Greek school in Balat.

ΠΑΤΡΙΑΡΧΙΚΗ
ΤΟΥ ΓΕΝΟΥΣ ΣΧΟ

⑦ ★ **Greek Orthodox Patriarchate.** Enter through the high-security gate (a reminder of numerous fire and bomb attacks) and through the high-walled courtyard to **St George's Church's** neo-classical marble entrance. This has been head of the Patriarchate since moving from Church of the Pammakaristos (see bullet ①) in 1586. Two mosaic fragments were saved from there; look out for the Virgin Mary and John and Baptist, and also for the Column of Flagellation to which Christ was bound and flogged. Many of the treasures—like the lecterns inlaid with mother-of-pearl—were brought from other regions. Like most Greek churches, I find this a strange combination of ostentation and serenity; its wall of gold icons gleaming in shafts of sunlight, contrasting with its dark wooden pews and aroma of incense. 🕘 *30 min. 35 Sadrazam Ali Paşa Cad. www.ec-patr.org. Open daily 9am–4.30pm.*

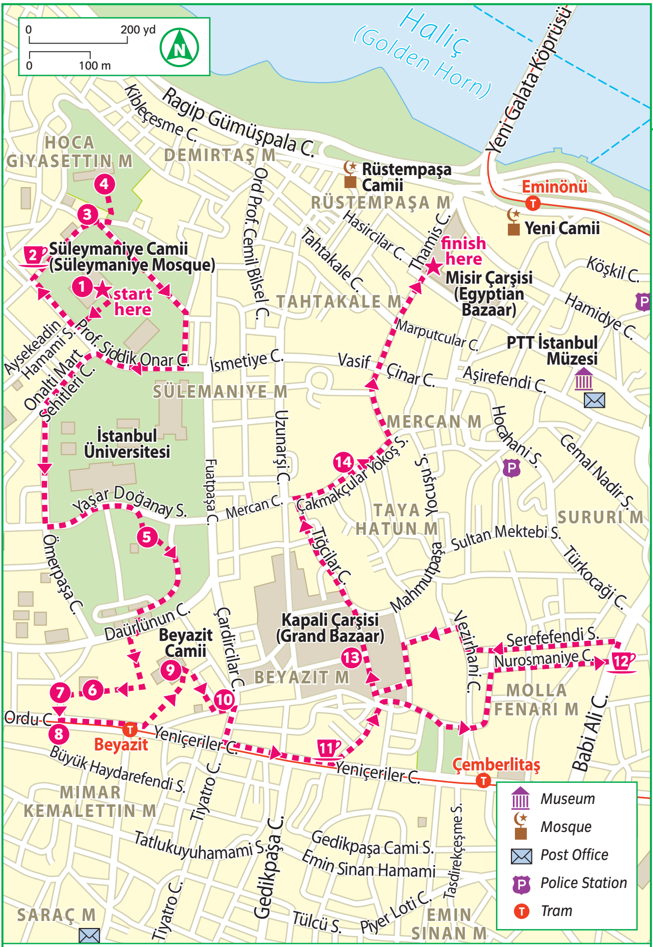
⑧ ★ **St Stephan of the Bulgars (Sveti Stefan).** Hard to believe that this gleaming white church was all made from cast-iron (from a flat-pack!), one of the world's few surviving iron buildings. Constructed by Hovsep Aznavour in 1898, 500 tonnes of metal plaques were shipped from Vienna via the Black Sea, then assembled far quicker than it takes most of us to build a flat-pack desk. Touch the cold pillars inside to realize that even the interior is from iron, also housing icons and six majestic bells, all made in Russia. Built when 30,000 Bulgarians lived in Constantinople, this was significant during the Bulgarians' struggle for independence. 🕘 *20 min. Mürsel Paşa Cad. Open daily 8am–5pm.*

Feast on intestine soup at Tarihi Haliç Işkembecisi.

9 **kids** ★★ **Tarihi Haliç Işkembecisi.** Famous for its *işkember* (spit-roast beef intestines), and *kokorec* (intestine soup, a great hangover cure) this 24-hour restaurant has two floors of Atatürk photographs and memorabilia, topped by a fabulous terrace: a perfect all-day breakfast spot. *315 Abdulezelpasa Cad.* ☎ *0212 534 9414. $.*

⑩ ★ **Kadin Eserleri Kütüphanesi (Women's Library and Information Center).** Founded in 1990 by women academics and journalists, Turkey's only women's library is located in a once-derelict stone building, renovated by architect and poet Cengiz Bektas with tiny amphitheatre in its garden. Publishing important papers annually in English and Turkish, its shelves groan with books and periodicals on myriad topics relating to women dating back to 1867. The foundation directors ask all visitors to donate visual, audio or written documents about women from their family, or relevant research. 🕘 *20 min. Fener Vapur Iskelesi Karsisi.* ☎ *0212 534 9550. www.kadineserleri.org. Open Mon–Fri 10am–6pm.*

Beyazit's **Bazaars & Mosques**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Hamidye C.
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Cemal Nadir S.
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SURURI M
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Sultan Mektebi S.
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Mahmutpaşa
Türkocaği C.
Ömerpaşa C.
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Babi Ali C.
Ordu C.
Beyazit
Yeniçeriler C.
Yeniçeriler C.
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Büyük Haydarefendi S.
MIMAR KEMALETTIN M
Tiyatro C.
Tatlukuyuhamami S.
Gedikpaşa C.
Gedikpaşa Cami S.
Emin Sinan Hamami
Tasdirekçeşme S.
Tülcü S.
Piyer Loti C.
EMIN SINAN M
Tiyatro C.
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Museum
Mosque
Post Office
Police Station
Tram

1 Süleymaniye Camii (Mosque)
2 Lale Bahçesi
3 Mimar Sinan's tomb
4 Beyazit University Botanik Institut
5 Beyazit Kulesi (Tower)
6 Hürriyet Meydani (Freedom Square)
7 Calligraphy Museum
8 Forum of Theodosius
9 Beyazit Camii (Mosque)
10 Sahaflar Çarşisi (Book Sellers Bazaar)
11 Erenler
12 Sefa
13 Kapali Çarşisi (Covered, or Grand Bazaar)
14 Çakmakçilar Yokuşu

Dominated by two major landmarks, Kapali Çarşi (Grand Bazaar) and Süleymaniye Camii, Beyazit is chock-full of history and a center of commerce for centuries. From Eminönü, you'll pass a busy working area filled with *hans* (workshops) and sounds of hammering and chiselling, contrasting to the ethereal mood of the vast Süleymaniye mosque. **START: Metro or bus to Eminönü.**

Süleymaniye Camii, Mimar Sinan's favorite creation.

① ★★★ **Süleymaniye Camii (Mosque).** Mimar Sinan's greatest mosque in the city, Süleymaniye perches atop the highest of Istanbul's seven hills. Once you've enjoyed its newly renovated serene interior and huge ornate domes, visit Süleyman I's tomb and rose gardens and explore the grounds. In so-called 'addicts alley' where opium and hashish were once sold from cafés, the traders now specialize in equally pleasurable *kuru fasulye* (white beans). Look out for 'Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi' sign and take a peek; this was once part of the mosque's *medrese* (religious school) and now a library for students. Close by, the old hospital and asylum is now a fully functioning women's hospital; it's great that most of Sinan's *kuliye* (complex) is in use today. If you're walking down Mimar Sinan Caddesi, look out for metalworker Zafer-Iş (#40E) which hammers out copper and chrome household goods. 🕐 ***1 hr. See p 8 for details.***

2 **kids** ★★ **Lale Bahçesi.** A good choice for tea, *nargile* (water-pipe) and even a burger in this sunken tea garden, part of the old *imaret* (kitchen) complex that once fed the city's poor. It's now popular with local students and religious courting couples. ***12 Şifahane Sok, Suleymaniye Camii Yani. $.***

③ ★ **Mimar Sinan's tomb.** This modest tomb just outside the mosque's main walls is exactly where the architect wanted to be, close to his favorite Istanbul creation. (I guess one advantage of being Sinan is being able to design your own tomb.) From the street you can

Lale Café, once part of the mosque's kitchen.

catch a glimpse of the white tomb built from *kufeki* stone, with marble sarcophagus. The complex also has the tomb of Ali Talat Bey (1869–1922, a late-19th-century architect. 🕘 *10 min. Corner of Mimar Sinan Cad and Fetva Yokuşu Sok.*

④ **kids** ★ **Beyazit University Botanik Institut.** This makes an interesting little detour opposite Sinan's tomb, especially for green-fingered visitors. A short distance from the main university campus, these gardens and greenhouses have a range of fruit trees, saplings and hybrids. Although not particularly colorful, one of the greenhouses has windows overlooking the Haliç (Golden Horn), one of the oddest places I've ever seen a banana plant! Labelling isn't in English, but if you call ahead you might be able to arrange a brief tour in English. 🕘 *15–30 min.* ☎ *0212 455 5700. Mon–Fri 8.30am–4pm. Closed pub hols. Free.*

Species for studying at the Botanik Institut.

⑤ **kids** ★★ **Beyazit Kulesi (Tower).** In Istanbul University's gardens, Mahmoud II built this fire-watch tower in 1749 to prevent the many fires in wooden buildings. Made from wood itself, it predictably burnt down in 1756, replaced by another (wooden!) tower in 1826—which also burnt down. Yes, hindsight is a wonderful thing, but it did seem blindingly obvious . . . Thankfully, the practical architect Senekerim Balyan (see *Art & Architecture* p 172) built a stone tower in Ottoman Baroque style in 1828, to which three floors were later added. Since then it's been used for navigation and meteorological purposes, and now rendered redundant. Sadly it's impossible to ascend its 250 wooden steps without tortuous bureaucracy from the fire department, so instead admire its tiered exterior with balconies. 🕘 *10 min. Tram: Universeti.*

Used as a fire-watch tower in the days of wooden houses.

⑥ ★★ **Hürriyet Meydani (Freedom Square).** The Old City's largest public square, also known as Beyazit Meydani, is dominated by the ornate gateway to **Istanbul University.** Built in 393AD by Emperor Theodosius as Forum Tauri (Forum of the Bull), it once had the triumphal arch in the center decorated by bronze bull heads (see bullet ⑧). You might see a student demonstration, especially on Fridays, watched by vans full of armed riot police; if so, don't hang around! Usually the square is peaceful, lined with simple cafés, carts selling *simit* (sesame bread), and headscarfed women selling seeds to feed the annoying pigeons. 🕘 *20 min.*

⑦ ★★ Calligraphy Museum. This museum was once the *medrese* of the simple, stone Beyazit Mosque, later used as a library. Usually deserted, exhibits range from 14th-century Korans with intricate gold calligraphy to huge 19th-century *tuğras* (signatures) of sultans, albeit some woodworm infested. Forbidden in Islam to depict the human form, calligraphy was the art form of the Ottomans. Strange to think that Sultan Abdulhamid's late-19th century *tuğra* was created in the same year as Van Gogh's finest paintings. Check out the peaceful central courtyard—if open. 🕘 *30 min. Hurriyet Meydani.* ☎ *0212 527 5851. Open Tues–Sat 9am–4pm. 3 YTL. Tram: Beyazit.*

⑧ ★ Forum of Theodosius. Nip across busy Ordu Caddesi to what's left of the Triumphal Arch, built by Theodosius the Great, once part of Beyazit Squarewith a vaulted roof and three passageways. I love this rather ramshackle pile of stones, discovered between 1948 and 1961, including columns with peacock-feather emblems, perhaps created to resemble tears. 🕘 *15 min. Ordu Cad.*

Simit for sale outside the university.

⑨ ★ Beyazit Camii (mosque). Built in 1501–1506, this was the city's oldest imperial mosque, part of the

Beyazit Camii, Istanbul's oldest remaining imperial mosque.

külliye (complex) comprising *hamam*, *medrese* (now the **Calligraphy Museum**) and kitchen; the mosque itself was inspired by the **Haghia Sophia** (see p 7). Its serene courtyard houses the tomb of Beyazit II at the back of the gardens. (🕒 *15 min.)* On your way to Sahaflar Çarşisi (see bullet ⑩) you'll see sellers of *tespi* (prayer beads) and collectors' items like foreign banknotes. On my last visit, a dealer offered me old Iraqi banknotes with Saddam Hussain's portrait, for 5 YTL. Bargain! 🕒 *20 min. Hürriyet Meydani. Open daily 9am–dusk. Tram: Beyazit.*

⑩ ★ **Sahaflar Çarşisi (Booksellers Bazaar).** Before books were first published in 1729, the written word was seen as a corrupting European influence, so only handwritten manuscripts were sold here. Today, the picturesque courtyard market specializes in text-books for local students, with some stalls selling photographic books on Istanbul, calligraphy and miniatures. At the center, look out for the bust of Ibrahim Muteferrika who printed the first books in Turkish in 1732. On my way to the Grand Bazaar, I can't resist passing by the table-full of sleeping kittens, looked after by the stallholder – unfortunately not for sale! 🕒 *20 min. Sahaflar Çarşisi Sok. Open daily 9am–8pm. Tram: Beyazit.*

11 kids ★★★ **Erenler.** If you prefer tea with fruity *nargile* (water-pipe), this leafy courtyard adjacent to Çorlulu Ali Paşa mosque is one of my favorites, packed with locals and—thankfully—prices to match. *36 Çorlulu Alipaşa Medressesi, Yeniceriler Cad.* ☎ *0212 511 8853. $*

12 kids ★★ **Sefa.** Packed with locals, this no-frills lunch spot is perfect for a brisk fill-up with lamb kebabs, chicken, and rice. *17 Nuruosmaniye Cad. $*

⑬ kids ★★★ **Kapali Çarşisi (Covered, or Grand Bazaar).** From here, you'll probably enter the vast Kapali Çarşisi via Beyazit Gate. Keep your eye on the signs, giving you an idea of directions. If not, enjoy getting lost! If you're shopping for anything specific, don't buy at the first place you see, especially if it's a big buy; take a business card and shop around. The market retains elements of its centuries-old trading practices (although 16th-century merchants never bothered with the false charm), but TV screens suspended from the ceilings and cappuccinos bring it firmly into the 21st century. 🕒 *Anything from 1 hr. See p 8 for details.*

⑭ kids ★★ **Çakmakçilar Yokuşu.** For a taste of traditional trading, head to two of Istanbul's oldest hans, usually three levels of tiny workshops built around a courtyard, also used for storage. Hardly the place for souvenirs, these workshops still have tradesmen knocking out garments and wooden tools. Climb up to the top floor of the arcaded **Büyük Yeni Han** to see its quiet courtyard. Further up busy Cakmakcilar Yokusu, an important hub of the bazaar quarter, **Büyük Valide Han's** courtyard houses Cem Evi, a Shiite mosque. Ask around for directions to climb to the han's roof, and you'll be rewarded with a sea of rooftops, one of the city's most interesting panoramas. From here, it's an easy walk to the tram stations. 🕒 *40 min. Hans – open Mon–Sat 9.30am–6.30pm. Tram: Eminönü.* ●

4

The Best **Shopping**

Shopping Best Bets

Best **Felt Flowery Hats**
★★★ Cocoon, *13-17 Küçükayasofya Cad. (p 91)*

Best **Rummage for Designer Seconds**
★★★ Beyoğlu Iş Merkezi, *187 Istiklal Cad. (p 95)*

Best **Arty Glassware**
★★ Paşabahçe, *150A Istiklal Cad. (p 94)*

Best **Luxury Ottomania**
★★ Sevan Bicakci, *1A Sair Nedim Cad. (p 95)*

Best for **Silk Central Asian Gowns**
★★★ Ali Textile, *36/15 Çorlulu Ali Paşa Medrese, Yeniçeriler Cad. (p 91)*

Best for **Second-Hand Accordions**
★★ Gözde Muzik, *6B Galipdede Cad. (p 90)*

Best **Hand-Made Costume Jewelry**
★★★ Chris Kami, *116/1A Hangecidi Sok. (p 94)*

Best for **Traditional Greek Music**
★★ Karakedi Plak Evi, *133 Istiklal Cad. (p 90)*

Best for **Endless Choice of Carpets**
★★★ Kapali Çarşisi, *Beyazit. (p 96)*

Best for **Satisfying a Sweet Tooth**
★★ Hafiz Mustafa, *84-86 Hamidiye Cad (p 93)*

Best for **Wannabe Interior Designers**
★★ A La Turca, *4 Faikpaşa Yokuşu (p 89)*

Best for **Fresh Pistachios**
★★★ Misir Çarşisi (Spice Market), *Eminönü (p 96)*

Best **Tasty Turkish Coffee**
★★ Kurukahveci Mehmet Efendi, *66 Tahmis Sokak. (p 93)*

Best for **Cinnamon Olive-Oil Soap**
★★ Abdulla, *62 Halicilar Cad, Kapaliçarşi. (p 93)*

Best **Sunny Sunday Market**
★★★ Ortaköy, *Ortaköy Meydani. (p 96)*

Best **Chunky Platform Shoes**
★★ Beta, *69 Istiklal Cad. (p 92)*

Best **Postcards of Old Istanbul**
★★ Levant Koleksiyon, *188 Istiklal Cad. (p 90)*

Best **Clothes for Street-Smart Men**
★★ Kiğili, *56 Istiklal Cad. (p 92)*

Best for **Traditional Anatolian Fabrics**
★★ Galeri Hediye, *72 Misir Çarşisi. (p 91)*

Best **Market for People-Watching**
★★★ Dolapdere Bazaar, *Tarlibasi. (p 95)*

Adorn your table with fabrics from Galeri Hediye.

OTANTİK
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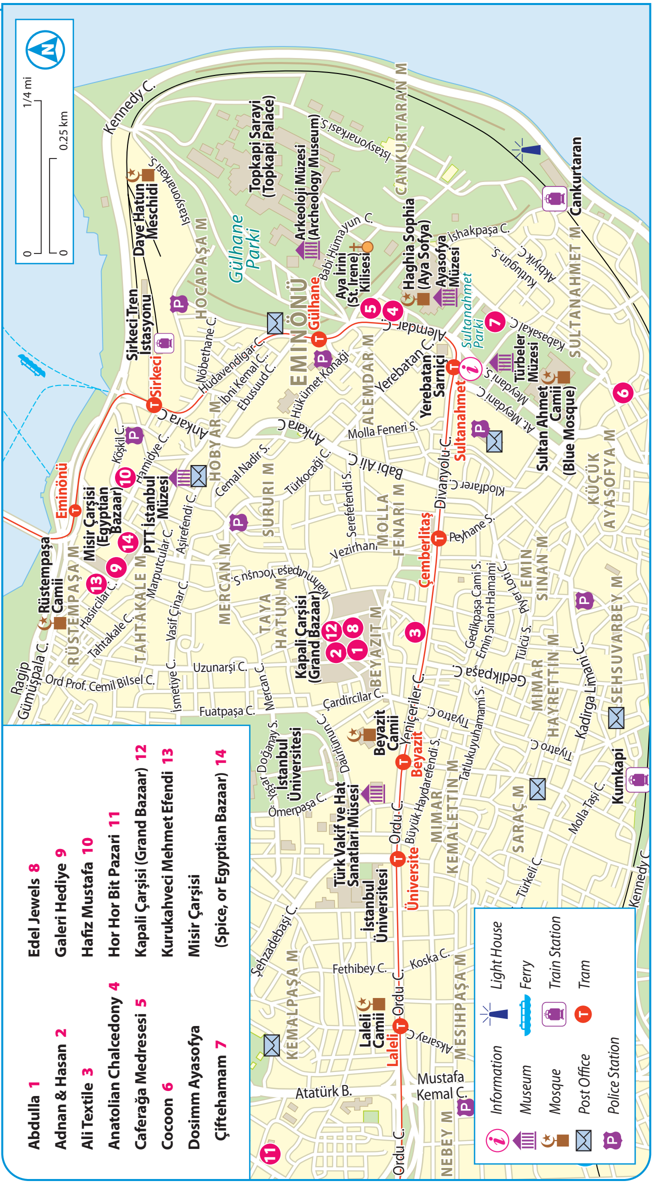
Beyoğlu Shopping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Mustafa Kemal C.
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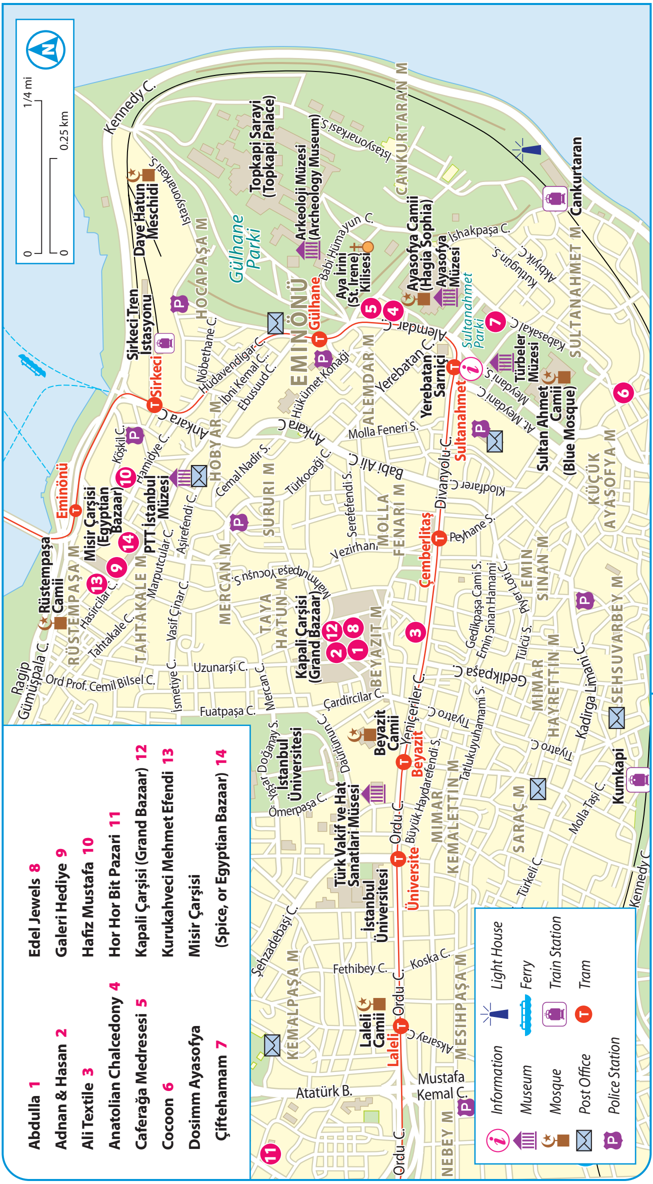
Mosque
Post Office
Police Station
Light House
Ferry
Train Station
Tram

Abdulla 1
Adnan & Hasan 2
Ali Textile 3
Anatolian Chalcedony 4
Caferağa Medresesi 5
Cocoon 6
Dosimm Ayasofya Çiftehamam 7
Edel Jewels 8
Galeri Hediye 9
Hafiz Mustafa 10
Hor Hor Bit Pazari 11
Kapali Çarşisi (Grand Bazaar) 12
Kurukahveci Mehmet Efendi 13
Misir Çarşisi (Spice, or Egyptian Bazaar) 14

Old City Shopping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Akbiyik C.
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Ebusuud C.
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Ordu C.
Büyük Haydarefendi S.
MIMAR KEMALETTIN M
SARAÇ M
Türkeli C.
Molla Taşi C.
Kumkapi
Kennedy C.
Üniversite
Şehzadebaşi C.
KEMALPAŞA M
Fethibey C.
Koska C.
Laleli Camii
Laleli
Aksaray C.
MESIHPAŞA M
Atatürk B.
Mustafa Kemal C.
NEBEY M
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Information
Museum
Mosque
Post Office
Police Station
Light House
Ferry
Train Station
Tram

- **Abdulla** 1
- **Adnan & Hasan** 2
- **Ali Textile** 3
- **Anatolian Chalcedony** 4
- **Caferağa Medresesi** 5
- **Cocoon** 6
- **Dosimm Ayasofya Çiftehamam** 7
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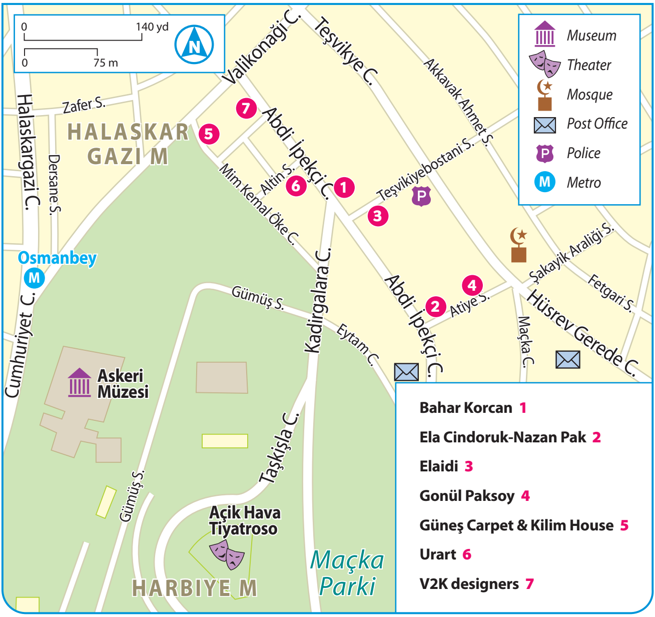
- **Kapali Çarşisi (Grand Bazaar)** 12
- **Kurukahveci Mehmet Efendi** 13
- **Misir Çarşisi (Spice, or Egyptian Bazaar)** 14

Nişantaşi Shopping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Zafer S.
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Halaskargazi C.
Dersane S.
Abdi İpekçi C.
Altin S.
Mim Kemal Öke C.
Teşvikiyebostani S.
Osmanbey
Şakayik Araliği S.
Fetgari S.
Gümüş S.
Kadirgalara C.
Eytam C.
Atiye S.
Hüsrev Gerede C.
Maçka C.
Cumhuriyet C.
Askeri Müzesi
Taşkişla C.
Açik Hava Tiyatroso
HARBIYE M
Maçka Parki
Bahar Korcan 1
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Gonül Paksoy 4
Güneş Carpet & Kilim House 5
Urart 6
V2K designers 7

Istanbul **Shopping A to Z**

Antiques & Vintage

★★ **A La Turca** GALATASARAY Chic showroom over four floors with European and Turkish treasures, from kilims (rugs) to early 1900s pottery, metal milk churns and gilded mirrors. Oozing good taste. *4 Faikpaşa Yokuşu,* ☎ *0212 245 2933. www.alaturcahouse.com. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus to Taksim, then walk. Map p 87.*

★ **Cihangir Eski Evi** ÇUKURCUMA In antique-filled Çukurcuma, this 'house clearing' dealer takes unwanted furniture, paintings and books. You might find Russian portraits, 1920s English silver tea sets, or Armenian textiles. *31A Ağahamam Sokak, Kuloglu.* ☎ *0212 249 7170. MC, V. Bus or metro: Taksim, then walk. Map p 87.*

A La Turca, loved by international designers.

Learn the saz or accordion from Gözde Musik.

★ **Hor Hor Bit Pazari** AKSARAY Tucked away in a working-class neighborhood, this six-floor arcade has over 200 shops specializing in early 20th-century French and Ottoman antiques. Expect to covet furniture and chandeliers, or candlesticks for easier transport home. *13 Kiriktulumba Sok, off Horhor Cad. Tram: Aksaray. Map p 88.*

★★ **Levant Koleksiyon** TÜNEL A treasure trove of old maps, engravings, and postcards of old Istanbul scenes. With the city's ever-changing face, this gives a real hint of its past. *188 Istiklal Cad. ☎ 0212 293 6333. www.levantkoleksiyon.com. MC, V. Tunnel to Tünel. Map p 87.*

Books & Music

★★ **Gözde Musik** TÜNEL On a street filled with music shops, swamped with the sounds of electric guitars and *nay* (bamboo flute), explore this tiny shop with *baglamas* (lutes) hanging from the ceiling, and second-hand accordions. *6B Galipdede Cad. ☎ 0212 251 4364. MC, V. Tunnel: Tünel. Map p 87.*

★★ kids **Homer Kitabevi** GALATASARAY A charming bookstore chock-full with English- and European-language books, specializing in international history, art and architecture. There's also a children's fiction section in the basement. *12A Yeni Carsi Cad. ☎ 0212 249 5902. www.homerbooks.com. MC, V. Bus or metro to Taksim, then walk. Map p 87.*

★★ **Istiklal Kitabevi** BEYOĞLU The best thing about bookshops on Istiklal is they double up as music stores with cafés. This bookstore, with decent English section, is also the areas' main ticket outlet, Biletix (see p 160). *79–81 Istiklal Cad. ☎ 0212 292 9518. www.istiklalkitap.com.tr. AE, MC, V. Bus or metro: Taksim. Map p 87.*

★ **Istanbul Kitapçisi** BEYOĞLU Although staff seem uninterested, this council-run bookshop has a good selection of English-language books on Istanbul and Turkey, plus CDs and local maps. *191 Istiklal Cad. ☎ 0212 292 7692. www.istanbulkitapcisi.com. MC. V. Bus to Taksim then walk. Map p 87.*

★★ **Karakedi Plak Evi** BEYOĞLU A tiny backstreet stall, here since 1964, the boss is happy to play you specialist Rum (ethnic Greek) and old Jewish traditional music, available on CD, cassette, and vinyl. *Behind 133 Istiklal Cad. No phone. MC, V. Bus or Metro to Taksim. Map p 87.*

★★ **Lale Plak** TÜNEL Jazz lovers flock to this tiny music store specialising in international jazz. Going strong for over 50 years, the store features all musicians in the Istanbul Jazz Festival (see *Savvy Traveler* p 161), sometimes selling autographed copies. *1 Galipdede Cad. ☎ 0212 293 7739. MC, V. Tunnel: Tünel. Map p 87.*

Carpets, Kilims & Fabrics

★ **Adnan & Hasan** BEYAZIT A pleasant novelty in the Bazaar's carpet shops, fixed prices are all displayed here. Laid-back owners love their selection of carpets and kilims from Turkey, Caucuses and Afghanistan, with a great international following among the great and the good. *89–92 Halicilar Cad, Kapaliçarşi. ☎ 0212 527 9887. www.adnanandhasan.com. AE, DC, MC, V. Tram or bus to Beyazit: Map p 88.*

★★★ **Ali Textile** BEYAZIT In a courtyard lined with workshops mending old carpets, Ali has small bags and cushion-covers made from carpets and kilims, plus traditional Central Asian coats, all very affordable. Fixed price and friendly. *36/15 Çorlulu Ali Paşa Medrese, Yeniçeriler Cad. ☎ 0535 367 5333. MC, V. Tram: Beyazit. Map p 88.*

★★★ **kids** **Cocoon** SULTANAHMET Hand-made felt accessories come in bright colours, all from traditional Central Asian designs using bold patterns and naturally dyed fabrics, plus tribal kilims, hand-woven *filikli* (long-pile fur made from goat hair) and Angora fleece. Great for gifts. *13–17 Küçükayasofya Cad. ☎ 0212 638 6450. www.cocoontr.com. AE, MC, V. Tram: Sultanahmet. Map p 88.*

Central Asian traditional gown at Ali Textile.

Cocoon's fun flowers in felt.

★★ **Dosimm Ayasofya Çiftehamam** SULTANAHMET Located inside a historic *hamam* (see p 22) this government-run carpet shop has clearly displayed fixed prices, with no hard sell. The small collection covers a good range of prices and styles from throughout Turkey. *2/4 Bab-I Humayun Cad. Tram: Sultanahmet. Map p 88.*

★★ **Galeri Hediye** EMINÖNÜ This textile store sells unusual and traditional fabrics using Anatolian designs, usually multi-colored ornate stripes. Check out *kumaş*, a colorful striped design that makes wonderful tablecloths or throws and sold by the meter. *72 Misir Çarşisi. ☎ 0212 511 0506. MV, V. Tram: Eminönü. Map p 88.*

★★ **Güneş Carpet & Kilim House** NIŞANTAŞI A woman's touch in this male-dominated business, Güneş Öztarakçi has been selling carpets for 35 years, with an astounding collection in her 'carpet museum'. An expert in quality old Turkish carpets, she makes you welcome without the high-pressure sales pitch. ***5 Mimar Kemal Öke Cad.* ☎ *0212 225 1954. www.gunescarpet.com. AE, DC, MC, V. Minibus: Nişantaşi. Map p 89.***

Clothes & Accessories

★ **Antijen** GALATASARAY Great for men's gear, especially jeans, this also has a selection of bright, quirky womenswear from their own design label Antijen plus a small funky collection of bags and coats. ***9B Yeni Çarşi Cad, Kuloğlu.* ☎ *0212 251 8614. MC, V. Bus or metro to Taksim, then walk. Map p 87.***

★★ **Bahar Korcan** NIŞANTAŞI Istanbul designer Korcan's elegant showroom shows off her one-off pieces, usually mixing fabrics like patchwork coats and appliquéd fishtail skirts, with obvious inspiration from Ottoman designs. ***Isparta Palas, 19/3 Abdi Ipekci Cad.* ☎ *0212 296 9276. www.baharkorcan.org. MC, V. Minibus: Nişantaşi. Map p 89.***

Bahar Korcan's patchwork coats.

★★ **Beta** BEYOĞLU My favorite shoe shop specializes in chunky shoes and boots, often in bright colors with flower motifs. Men's designs are more conventional! On the pricey side; check out their seasonal sales. (Other city-wide branches). ***69 Istiklal Cad.* ☎ *0212 292 5786. www.betashoes.com. AE, MC, V. Bus or Metro to Taksim. Map p 87.***

★ **Elaidi** NIŞANTAŞI Local designer Mehtap Elaidi puts a twist on conventional styles, like crisp tailored shirts with balloon sleeves, or fitted skirts with a fish tail. Check out the small collection of striking, simple jewelry. ***Ayde Apartmen, 11/1 Boston Sokak .* ☎ *0212 236 3783. www.elaidi.net. MC, V. Minibus: Nişantaşi. Map p 89.***

★★ **Gonül Paksoy** NIŞANTAŞI Using the very best fabrics, Paksoy's designs mean luxurious clothing and accessories. Silks, linen and wool with natural dyes of mulberry and brown tones, all her pieces are unique, from exquisite hand-made shoes to the simplest of elegant jackets. ***6A Atiye Sokak.* ☎ *0212 261 9081. AE, DC, MC, V. Minibus: Nişantaşi. Map p 89.***

★★ **Kiğili** BEYOĞLU A hard one to pronounce, but Kiğili (kee'lu) has top men's clothes over its three floors, from fine cotton shirts to the best woolen suits and silk ties, using top European designs. ***56 Istiklal Cad.*☎ *0212 245 0011. www.kigili.com.tr. MC, MC, V. Bus/funicular: Taksim. Map p 87.***

★★ **Köstebek** BEYOĞLU T-shirts with cheeky designs that guys will love, witty one-liners and simple line-drawings with slogans. *11 Alt Kat, Asnavur Pasaji, Istiklal Cad. ☎ 0212 244 9913. MC, V. Bus or Metro: Taksim. Map p 87.*

★ **Midnight Express** BEYOĞLU Tucked away new boutique from Istanbul's husband-and-wife team Banu Bora (fashion) and Tayfun Mumcu (furniture). Luxury meets bohemian for womenswear, using soft silks and crushed gold, plus sequined bags. (The name is an ironic tip-of-the-hat to the movie!) *3/F Misir Apt, 163 Istiklal Cad. ☎ 0212 215 1968. www.midnightexpress.com.tr. MC, V. Bus/funicular: Taksim. Map p 87.*

★ **V2K designers** NIŞANTAŞI Achingly fashionable outlet for established Vakko department store. Labels include jeans by dVb and J Brand, and top designers Alexander Wang, Karl Lagerfeld, and Running Dog. *29 Abdi Ipekçi Cad. ☎ 0212 219 9498. www.v2kdesigners.com.tr. AE, DC, MC, V. Minibus: Nişantaşi. Map p 89.*

Food

★ **Antre Gourmet** CIHANGIR Top-quality delicious local foods, including mouth-watering cheeses, jams, pickles, and the best Turkish olives and oils. Ideal for a quality picnic. *40A Akarsu Cad. ☎ 0212 292 8972. MC, V. Bus or metro: Taksim, then walk. Map p 87.*

★★ **Hafiz Mustafa** SIRKECI Sample some of Turkey's best *lokum* (Turkish Delight), here since 1864, or satisfy a sweet tooth with pastries and fruity boiled sweets. Escape to the simple café upstairs for a glass of tea. *84-86 Hamidiye Cad. ☎ 0212 513 3610. MC, V. Tram: Sirkeci. Map p 88.*

★★ **Kurukahveci Mehmet Efendi** EMINÖNÜ The granddaddy of Turkish coffee ('Turks' gift to the world', as they point out), Mehmet Efendi has roasted beans since 1871. The perennially popular family store still roasts and grinds beans in all varieties. *66 Tahmis Sokak. ☎ 0212 511 4262. MC, V. Tram: Sirkeci. Map p 88.*

Homewear & Handicrafts

★★ **Abdulla** BEYAZIT Gorgeous hand-made fragranced olive-oil soaps in wooden presentation boxes, natural loofahs, and hand-spun wool shawls make this a popular choice for quality gifts. *62 Halicilar Cad, Kapaliçarşi. ☎ 0212 527 3684.*

Shopping Zones

Kapali Çarşisi (Grand Bazaar) and area has everything from carpets to glassware, plus cheap clothes. **Sultanahmet** is, predictably, for tourist-orientated souvenirs, while **Eminönü** has traditional market streets around **Misir Çarşisi**. Trawl **Çukurcuma**'s streets for antiques, with furniture, handbags and 19th-century family portraits spilling onto the pavements. In **Beyoğlu**, Turkish fashion stores and lively book and music stores center along **Istiklal Caddesi** and its continuation **Galip Dede Caddesi** is the place for musicians. Fashionistas flock to **Nişantaşi**'s boutiques for Turkish and foreign designers.

Clean up your act at Abdulla.

www.abdulla.com. AE, MC, V. Tram or bus to Beyazit: Map p 88.

★ **Haremlique** AKARETLER Duvets designed with Ottoman scenes, organic Turkish cotton towels and pashmina blankets will give your bathroom or bedroom a touch of glamour. Their special blends of Turkish coffee with cinnamon and beautifully packaged 100% olive oil soaps make lovely gifts. *11 !air Nedim Bey Cad. ☎ 0212 236 3843. www.haremlique.com. Bus to Beşiktaş. Map p 87.*

★ **Iznik Foundation** KÜRÜÇEŞME This showroom has unusual hand-painted tiles and ceramic vases and bowls. Some are recreations of classic Ottoman designs, other are contemporary styles which make great wall tiles. *7 Öksüz Cocuk Sok. ☎ 0212 287 3243. www.iznik.com. AE, MC, V. Bus: Beşiktaş. Map p 87.*

★★ **Paşabahçe** BEYOĞLU Creating household glassware since 1935, Paşabahçe's showroom goes up a few notches with exquisite tableware, ceramics, contemporary vases and candlesticks. Check out their hand-painted coffee cups downstairs. *150A Istiklal Cad. ☎ 0212 244 0544. AE, MC. V. Bus to Taksim then walk. Map p 87.*

★★★ **Urart** NIŞANTAŞI A dazzling display of creations, some of them in the Archaeology Museum (p 14), taking ancient pieces and recreate them from silver, gold or marble. Look out for miniature versions of a Topkapi Palace pillar and Hittite relics from around 14000 BC, recreated as gold jewelry.*18 Abdi Ipekçi Cad. ☎ 0212 246 7194. AE, DC, MC, V. Minibus: Nişantaşi. Map p 89.*

Jewelry

★ **Anatolian Chalcedony** SULTANAHMET This showroom exhibits the valuable and ancient blue chalcedony stone, mined in Eskişehir and said to have special powers, in the form of beautifully polished carved jewelry and rough pieces. *2 Ayasofya Caferiye Sok. ☎ 0212 527 6376. AE, MC. V. Tram: Sultanahmet. Map p 88.*

★★★ **Chris Kami** BEYOĞLU Kami hand-makes rings, necklaces, and bracelets weaving and bending wire with polished stones. No precious materials here, making everything affordable and wonderfully creative. My favorite Istanbul jeweler! *116/1A Hangecidi Sokak, Hazzo Pulo Pasaji, off Istiklal Cad. ☎ 0212 292 6819. MC, V. Bus or metro: Taksim. Map p 87.*

★ **Edel Jewels** BEYAZIT The Bazaar's (see p 8) outlet for top designer Cemil Ipekci, whose collection includes rose gold and diamonds set on oxidized silver, all in simple and elegant designs. *73 Kalpakçilar Cad, Kapaliçarşi. ☎ 0212 527 9797. www.edeljewels.com. AE, DC, MC, V. Tram or bus to Beyazit: Map p 88.*

★★ **Ela Cindoruk-Nazan Pak** NIŞANTAŞI Young designers Cindoruk and Pak showcase their

What Time?

Opening hours vary wildly depending on area, but usually 10am–7pm and many stores on Istiklal Caddesi—especially books and music—are open until 11pm on Fri and Sat. Most stores city-wide open on Sunday, except for small privately run places, Kapali Çarşisi (Grand Bazaar) and Misir Çarşisi (Egyptian Bazaar). Istanbul's many malls, popular with locals at weekends, usually close around 9 or 10pm.

own exquisite jewelry in usual materials, including paper and resin, plus collections from other up-and-coming designers. *14 Atiye Sokak, off Abdi Ipekçi Cad.* ☎ *0212 219 6292. www.elnajewel.com. AE, DC, MC, V. Minibus: Nişantaşi. Map p 89.*

★★ **Mor** CUKURCUMA Gorgeous chunky jewelry including rings, necklaces and bold strips of hand-twisted silver, by local designers Nurettin Ayan and Zeynep Güven. *16/1 Sarayhan, Turnacibaşi Sokak.* ☎ *0212 292 8817. MC, V. Bus to Taksim, then walk. Map p 87.*

★★ **Sevan Biçakci** AKARETLER Superb one-off pieces by a master jewelry designer means sculpted Ottoman-inspired rings the size of golf balls, using traditional and unique techniques like micro-mosaics and miniature paintings. His first store in this designer-filled street opened in May 2008. *W Hotel, 1A Sair Nedim Cad.* ☎ *0212 236 9199. www.sevanbicakci.com. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: Beşiktaş. Map p 87.*

Markets & Malls

kids ★★★ **Beyoğlu Iş Merkezi** BEYOĞLU A three-story mall with stalls, trawl through 95% rubbish to find the gems, from Pink men's shirts or Miss Sixty jeans at a fraction of their original price. *Terzi* (tailors) downstairs make fast alterations for a couple of lira. My best bet for a wardrobe revamp. *187 Istiklal Cad. Most stalls cash only. Bus to Taksim then walk. Map p 87.*

★ **Caferağa Medresesi** SULTANAHMET Located in an old *medrese*, a tiny jewelry and handicraft workshops surround the courtyard, where artisans produce hand-painted ceramics, Ottoman calligraphy, and ceramics. Caferaga Sokak, *1 Soğukkuyu Çikmazi.* ☎ *0212 513 3601. Tram: Sultanahmet. Map p 88.*

★★★ **Dolapdere Bazaar** TARLIBAŞI Sunday street market where locals go for the best and cheapest fruit, vegetables and

Edel Jewel's elegant designs.

Buying a Carpet?

How much do carpets cost? Anything between $100 and $10,000. If you know what you want and what it's worth, **Kapali Çarsisi** (Grand Bazaar) is a good starting point, with many stores competing for business. For novices, I recommend fixed-price stores with no hard-sell, to indicate what your money can buy. Try the government-run **Dosimm Ayasofya Çiftehamam** (see p 91) with prices of carpets and kilims clearly displayed, starting from $100. If local 'friends', tour guides, or hotel staff take you to a store, their commission (anything from 20–50%) will be added to your price. Best go alone.

honey plus headscarves, stripy socks and bed linen. Forget souvenirs; this gypsy area is wonderful for people-watching. Note: guard your valuables! ***From Omer Hayyam Cad. Bus to Şişhane (Tarlibaşi Cad) then walk. Map p 87.***

★ **Kanyon** LEVENT The most architecturally stunning and upmarket of Istanbul's malls has boutiques, restaurants, cafés and cinemas. Look out for **Remzi Kitabevi** (books), **Harvey Nichols** (high-end fashion), **Vakko** (fashion) and **Paşabahçe Bütik** (homewear). ***Büyükdere Cad. ☎ 0212 353 5300. www.kanyon.com.tr. Metro: Levent. Map p 87.***

★★★ **Kapali Çarşisi (Grand Bazaar)** BEYAZIT The grande dame of all markets, this is a great historical as well as shopping destination. Istanbul's best selection of carpets, leather, painted ceramics and gold, with emphasis on helping tourists rather than the traditional trading center of centuries past. (See p 8 for more details.) ***Beyazit. www.kapalicarsi.org.tr. Some stores accept CC. Tram: Beyazit. Map p 88.***

★★★ **Misir Çarşisi (Spice, or Egyptian, Bazaar)** EMINÖNÜ An historic Istanbul spice market, although now veering more towards souvenirs and jewelry shops. A good selection of spices, dried fruit and *lokum*, with more at the stalls outside. (See p 9 for more details.) ***Eminönü. Some stores accept CC. Tram or bus: Eminönü. Map p 88.***

★★★ **Ortaköy Craft Market** ORTAKÖY Fabulous fun weekend market with jewelry and accessories. In summer, it's packed with locals enjoying a day out. Browse the stalls along the waterfront with good-natured vendors (see *Best in Three Days*, p 18). ***Ortaköy Meydani. Some stores accept CC. Bus or ferry: Ortaköy. Map p 87.*** ●

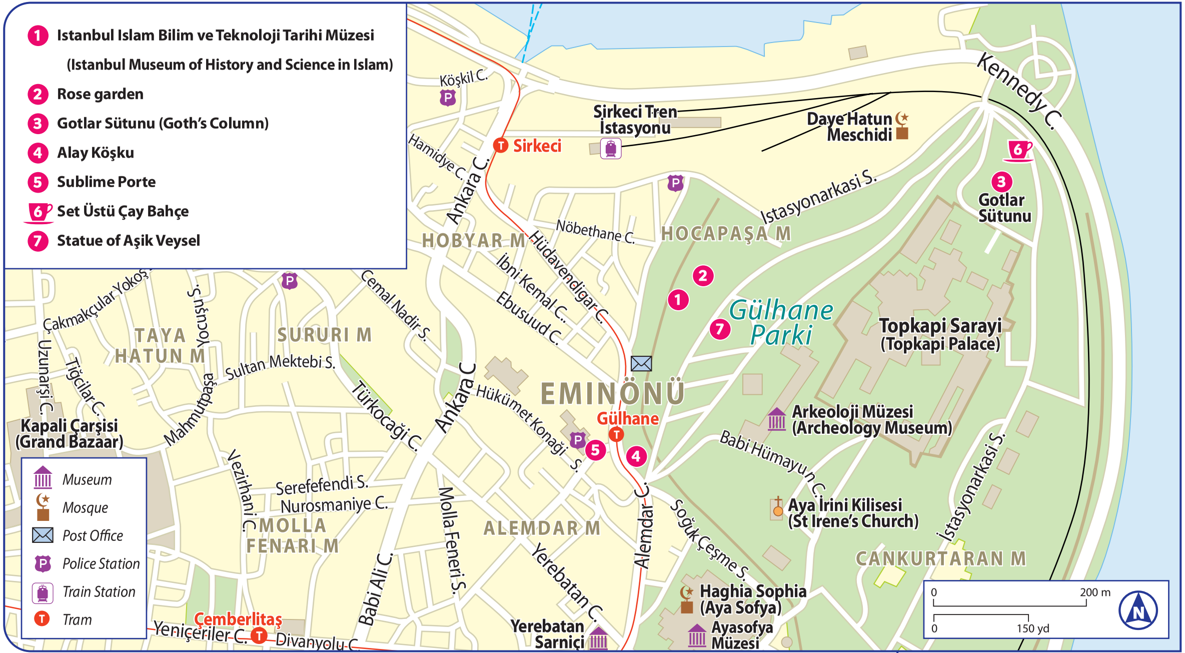
Spice Market's plethora of olives.

LÜKS KALAMATA ZEYTİN 12.00 YTL
LÜKS KONTEYL ZEYTİN 8.00 YTL
HAVRAN KIRMA YEŞİL 7.50 YTL
BOMBAY DIYET ZEYTİN 9.00 YTL
EKSTRA GEMLİK ZEYTİN 6.80 YTL
ÖZEL AKHISAR KIRMA 9.50 YTL
ÖZEL AKHISAR ZEYTİN 11.00 YTL

5

The Best of the Outdoors

Gülhane Park



1. Istanbul Islam Bilim ve Teknoloji Tarihi Müzesi (Istanbul Museum of History and Science in Islam)
2. Rose garden
3. Gotlar Sütunu (Goth's Column)
4. Alay Köşku
5. Sublime Porte
6. Set Üstü Çay Bahçe
7. Statue of Aşik Veysel

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Train Station
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Gotlar Sütunu
Daye Hatun Meschidi
Sirkeci Tren İstasyonu
Sirkeci
Köşkil C.
Hamidye C.
Ankara C.
Istasyonarkasi S.
HOCAPAŞA M
HOBYAR M
Nöbethane C.
Hüdavendigar C.
İbni Kemal C.
Ebusuud C.
Gülhane Parki
Topkapi Sarayi (Topkapi Palace)
Arkeoloji Müzesi (Archeology Museum)
Babi Hümayun C.
Aya İrini Kilisesi (St Irene's Church)
Istasyonarkasi S.
CANKURTARAN M
Soğuk Çeşme S.
Haghia Sophia (Aya Sofya)
Ayasofya Müzesi
Alemdar C.
EMINÖNÜ
Gülhane
Hükümet Konaği S.
Cemal Nadir S.
Çakmakçular Yokoşu
TAYA HATUN M
Yocnşu S.
SURURI M
Sultan Mektebi S.
Türkocaği C.
Ankara C.
Uzunarşi C.
Tığcılar C.
Mahmutpaşa
Kapali Çarşisi (Grand Bazaar)
Vezirhani C.
Serefefendi S.
Nurosmaniye C.
MOLLA FENARI M
Molla Feneri S.
ALEMDAR M
Yerebatan C.
Yerebatan Sarniçi
Babi Ali C.
Cemberlitaş
Yeniçeriler C.
Divanyolu C.

Nestled in what was the first courtyard of Topkapi Palace, Gülhane is Istanbul's oldest park, and a gathering place since it opened to the public in 1912. It was here that Atatürk showed the public the Latin alphabet for the first time, and more recently a place for weekend picnics and barbecues and free concerts by superstars like Ibrahim Tatlises (no accounting for taste). Recent years have seen a facelift: the scruffy zoo, aquarium and teahouses have gone — as have the vendors, barbecues and permission to walk on the grass. An ornamental bridge, fountain and museum have sprung up, with plans afoot to renovate the old barracks, but the park is still filled with families at weekends and courting couples on sneaky weekday afternoons. **START:** **Tram to Gülhane.**

① **kids** ★★ **Istanbul Islam Bilim ve Teknoloji Tarihi Müzesi (Istanbul Museum of History and Science in Islam.** I visited this museum when it first opened in July 2008, while they were still painting the ceilings. In a well laid-out exhibition covering several rooms (although, at the early stages lacking in English captions) this tells the story of Islamic scientists and astrologers who appeared to be at the forefront of early intellectual discoveries. Exhibits include the first astrological instruments in the Islamic world, dating back to the 9th century, including spherical astrolobes to measure the distance between objects in the atmosphere. At the main entrance, don't miss the recreation of a globe made by 14th-century Caliph al-Ma'mun with Baghdad at the center of the known world. It was interesting to learn about the first pioneers of calculus (it brought back memories of school math exams) and even the math of music, where the 13th century saw divisions of the octave in 17 unequal degrees. If you've seen your fair share of mosques, you'll be interested to see the models and explanation of the science of the first skyscrapers — i.e. minarets. 🕘 *1 hr. Gülhane Park.* ☎ *0212 528 8065. Open daily, 9am–4.30pm. Tram: Gülhane.*

② ★ **Rose garden.** Gülhane translates as 'rose house' so it's no

Newly-created ornamental bridge adds to the park's new look.

Escape the crowds.

coincidence that recent improvements include the rose garden outside the new museum. This historic park was originally made into a rose garden to allow the flowers' scent to waft to the palace, and now thanks to the smartening up and removal of several ugly buildings, they seem to stand out so much better. An interesting wooden curved sculpture like a latticed dome sits between that and the museum, near to a miniature of Galata Tower (see p 11) (a favorite photo point) and plants from Northern Cyprus.

Goth's column celebrating a Roman victory.

③ ★ **Gotlar Sütunu (Goth's Column).** No, nothing to do with dressing in black. On the eastern edge of the park, look through the trees for this 15m-high marble column dating back to the third century. Although its history is uncertain, it may have derived its name from the Latin inscription at its base, 'Fortune is restored to us because of victory over the Goths', commemorating a 3rd-century Roman victory. For such an historic landmark, it's a shame that there is no sign to explain its history (a complaint I have for all the parks). Close by are other remnants that reflect its historic past, like the squat column of stones topped with relief of a cross, plus a fenced-off area with broken pillars, walls and indications of a once-glorious past.

④ ★ **Alay Köşku.** Translating as Procession Pavilion, this was where the sultans would sneakily watch official processions opposite, especially the comings and goings outside the ornate entrance **Sublime Porte** (see bullet ⑤). In the case of Ibrahim I (nicknamed Ibrahim the Mad because of his eccentricities and excesses), sultan between 1640 and 1648, the pavilion was a perfect vantage point to aim his crossbow and threaten unsuspecting bystanders. These days, sporting a smart yellow-and-white painted façade with arched windows, it's not possible to get much further than the main doorway, approached by steep path leading straight there, as the building now houses offices.

⑤ ★ **Sublime Porte.** You probably passed this typically ornate rococo gateway when traveling up on the tram from Eminönü to Sultanahmet; its curvaceous roof dipping over the monogrammed marble gate, built in 1843, is hard to miss. Translating from the French to Bab-i Ali, this was the gateway to the political hub of the Ottoman Empire, its buildings containing the principal state departments, and later the official residence of the grand viziers, high-ranking political advisors. These days the superb rococo gate with armed police outside leads to the *vilayet*, the more pedestrian sounding provincial government departments.

Rococo gate of the Sublime Porte.

Alay Köşku, Sultans' vantage point.

6 ★★ kids Set Üstü Çay Bahçe. The main reason locals come to the park is to dwell here over *samvars* of tea, so be prepared to wait for a table, especially on summer evenings and weekends. Perched high at the edge of the park with dramatic views of the Marmara sea and over to Asia, kids will love the burgers or stuffed jacket potatoes. Pricier than it used to be, but worth it. *$.*

⑦ ★ **Statue of Aşik Veysel.** With surprisingly few statues and monuments in such an historic

Tortured genius Aşik Veysel.

park, my favorite is a charming sculpture of musician Aşik Veysel (1894–1973), playing the *saz* (traditional stringed instrument). His life was certainly marked with drama and sadness: Born in a field near Sivas as his mother returned from milking the cows, he contracted smallpox and went blind as a child, his parents and his baby son died, and his wife ran off with his brother's servant. He was a superb saz player and found his niche writing folk songs about the inevitability of death. Wildly popular in Turkey as a poet and musician, he became the official state poet in 1965, died of leukemia in 1973 and is still revered today. New York rock musician Joe Satriani was so inspired by his saz playing on his recent trip to Istanbul, he dedicated the track 'Asik Veysel' on his 2008 album *Professor Satchafunkilus and the Musterion of Rock* to him. Close by, yet a world away, is Turkey's first statue of Atatürk, founder of the Turkish republic, dating back to 1928, cast in bronze by Austrian sculptor Heinrich Krippel. Want to know what the time is? Within the flowerbeds close to the path are two hands of a clock, which really do tell the time accurately! ●

6 The Best Dining

Dining Best Bets

Best for **Cheap Kebabs**
★★★ Melekler $ *113 Ipek Sok. (p 112)*

Best **Romantic Rooftop**
★★★ Gaja $$$$ *Bayildim Cad. (p 110)*

Best **Lunch for Kids**
★★ Bab-i Hayat $$ *39/47 Misir Çarşisi (p 107)*

Best **Meyhane Madness**
★★ Boncuk $$$ *19 Nevizade Sok. (p 108)*

Best **Garden Terrace**
★★ Cezayir $$$ *16 Hayriye Cad. (p 109)*

Best **Stuffed Pancakes**
★★ Hala $$ *26 Çukurlu Çeşme Sok. (p 110)*

Best **Late-Night Coffee and Cakes**
★★ Özsüt $$ *206 Istiklal Cad. (p 113)*

Best **Sushi with Style**
★★ Vogue $$$$ *13/F, 48 BJK Plaza (p 115)*

Best **Sultanahmet Seafood**
★★ Balikci Sabahattin $$$$ *1 Cankurtaran Cad. (p 108)*

Best **Value Meal in Tünel**
★★ Lokanta Helvetia $$ *12 General Yazgan Sok (p 112)*

Best for **Fish with Greens**
★★ Doğa Balik $$$ *46 Arkarsu Yokusu (p 109)*

Best **Ottoman Cuisine**
★★ Feriyer Lokantasi $$$$ *40 Ciragan Cad. (p 110)*

Best **Value Fish**
★★ Sirkeci Balikcisi $$$ *5 Taya Hatun Sok. (p 114)*

Best **Menemen Breakfast**
★★★ Sutiş $$ *7 Istiklal Caddesi (p 115)*

Best **Dramatic Views**
★★★ Topaz $$$$ *50 Inönü Cad. (p 115)*

Best **Detox**
★ Saf $$ *70 Mesrutiyet Cad. (p 114)*

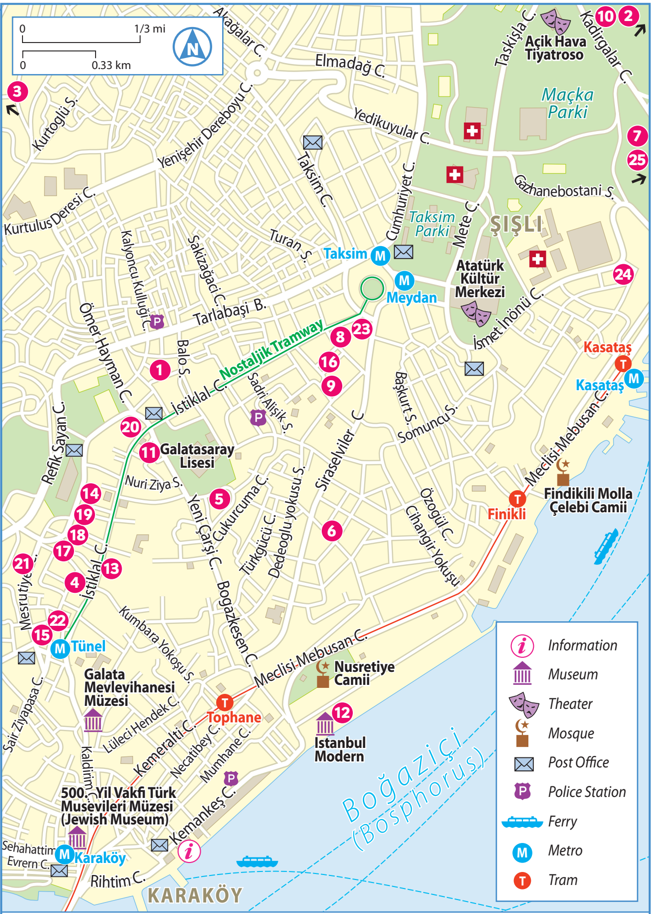
Best **Hilltop Retreat**
★★★ Sunset Grill & Bar $$$$ *Yol Sok, Ulus Park (p 115)*

Best **Barbecued Liver**
★★ Canim Ciğerim $ *1 Minare Sok. (p 109)*

Best **Istanbul Photographs**
★★ Kafe Ara $$ *1 Minare Sok. (p 111)*

Spoilt for choice at Özsüt.

Beyoğlu Dining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Elmadağ C.
Yedikuyular C.
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Maçka Parki
Gazhanebostani S.
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Taksim Parki
Mete C.
Cumhuriyet C.
Taksim C.
Turan S.
Taksim
Meydan
Atatürk Kültür Merkezi
İsmet İnönü C.
Kasataş
Kasataş
Kurtoğlu S.
Yenişehir Dereboyu C.
Kurtulus Deresi C.
Kalyoncu Kulluğı C.
Sakizağaci C.
Tarlabaşı B.
Nostaljik Tramway
Ömer Hayman C.
Balo S.
İstiklal C.
Sadri Alişik S.
Başkurt S.
Somuncu S.
Refik Sayan C.
Galatasaray Lisesi
Nuri Ziya S.
Meclisi Mebusan C.
Findikili Molla Çelebi Camii
Finikli
Sıraselviler C.
Çukurcuma C.
Yeni Çarşi C.
Türkgücü C.
Dedeoglu yokusu S.
Özogül C.
Cihangir Yokuşu
Meşrutiyet C.
İstiklal C.
Kumbara Yokoşu S.
Boğazkesen C.
Tünel
Nusretiye Camii
Galata Mevlevihanesi Müzesi
Tophane
Sair Ziyapasa C.
Lüleci Hendek C.
Kemeralti C.
Necatibey C.
Mumhane C.
Istanbul Modern
Kaldirim C.
500. Yil Vakfi Türk Musevileri Müzesi (Jewish Museum)
Kemankeş C.
Boğaziçi (Bosphorus)
Sehahattim Evrern C.
Karaköy
Rihtim C.
KARAKÖY
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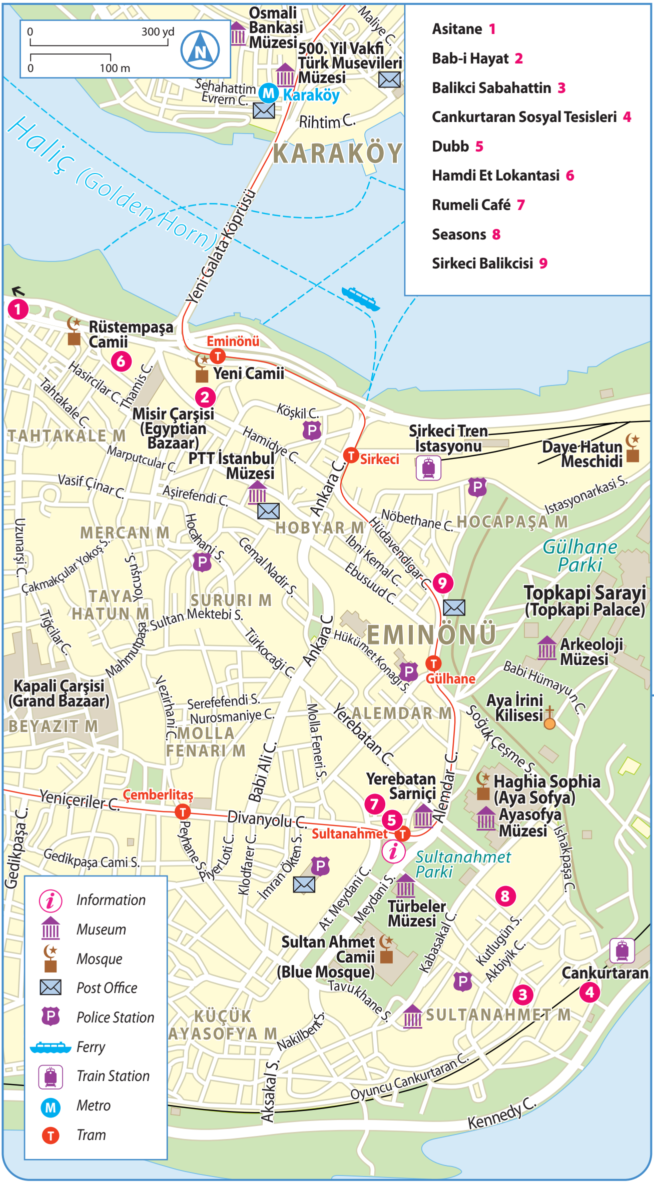
Information
Museum
Theater
Mosque
Post Office
Police Station
Ferry
Metro
Tram

Boncuk 1	**Hünkar** 10	**Mikla** 17
Brasserie Nişantaşi 2	**Kafe Ara** 11	**Moreish** 18
Café du Levant 3	**Istanbul Modern Café & Restaurant** 12	**Nu Teras** 19
Canim Ciğerim 4	**Leb-I Derya (Richmond)** 13	**Özsüt** 20
Cezayir 5	**Lokanta** 14	**Saf** 21
Doğa Balik 6	**Lokanta Helvetia** 15	**Sofyali 9** 22
Gaja 7	**Melekler** 16	**Sütiş** 23
Haci Baba 8		**Topaz** 24
Hala 9		**Vogue** 25

Old City Dining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Karaköy
Rihtim C.
KARAKÖY
Haliç (Golden Horn)
Yeni Galata Köprüsü
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Rüstempaşa Camii
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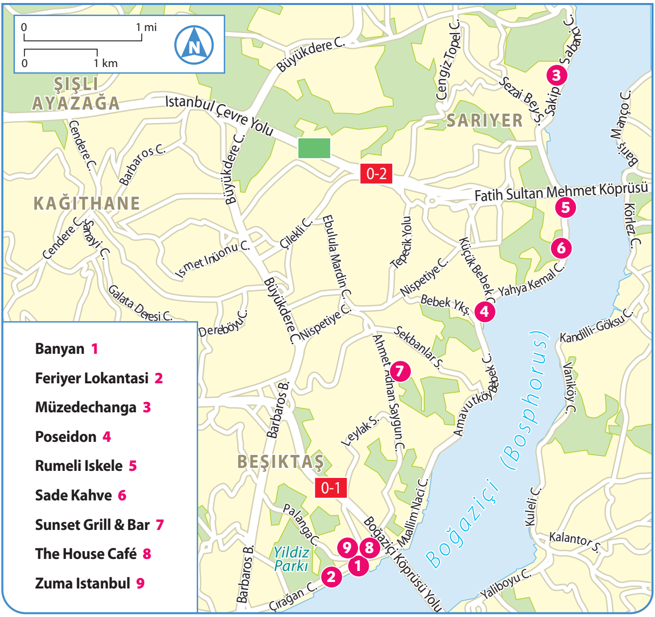
Eminönü
Yeni Camii
2
Hasircilar C.
Thamis C.
Tahtakale C.
Misir Çarşisi (Egyptian Bazaar)
Köşkil C.
TAHTAKALE M
Marputcular C.
Hamidye C.
PTT İstanbul Müzesi
Sirkeci
Ankara C.
Sirkeci Tren İstasyonu
Daye Hatun Meschidi
Vasif Çinar C.
Aşirefendi C.
Istasyonarkasi S.
Nöbethane C.
HOCAPAŞA M
HOBYAR M
MERCAN M
Hocahani S.
Hüdavendigar C.
Gülhane Parki
Uzunarşi C.
Çakmakçular Yokoş S.
Cemal Nadir S.
Ibni Kemal C.
Ebusuud C.
9
Topkapi Sarayi (Topkapi Palace)
Yocuş S.
TAYA HATUN M
SURURI M
Sultan Mektebi S.
Tiğcilar C.
Mahmutpaşa
Türkocaği C.
Ankara C
Hükümet Konaği S.
EMINÖNÜ
Arkeoloji Müzesi
Gülhane
Babi Hümayun C.
Kapali Çarşisi (Grand Bazaar)
BEYAZIT M
Vezirhani C.
Serefefendi S.
Nurosmaniye C.
MOLLA FENARI M
Molla Feneri S.
Yerebatan C.
ALEMDAR M
Aya İrini Kilisesi
Soğuk Çeşme S.
Babi Ali C.
Alemdar C.
Yerebatan Sarniçi
Haghia Sophia (Aya Sofya)
Ayasofya Müzesi
Yeniçeriler C.
Çemberlitaş
Divanyolu C.
7
5
Sultanahmet
Gedikpaşa C.
Gedikpaşa Cami S.
Peykane S.
Piyer Loti C.
Klodfarer C.
İmran Ökten S.
Sultanahmet Parki
İshakpaşa C.
At Meydani C.
Meydani S.
Türbeler Müzesi
8
Kabasakal C.
Kutlugün S.
Akbiyik C.
Sultan Ahmet Camii (Blue Mosque)
Tavukhane S.
Cankurtaran
3
4
KÜÇÜK AYASOFYA M
SULTANAHMET M
Nakilbent S.
Aksakal S.
Oyuncu Cankurtaran C.
Kennedy C.
Information
Museum
Mosque
Post Office
Police Station
Ferry
Train Station
Metro
Tram

Asitane 1
Bab-i Hayat 2
Balikci Sabahattin 3
Cankurtaran Sosyal Tesisleri 4
Dubb 5
Hamdi Et Lokantasi 6
Rumeli Café 7
Seasons 8
Sirkeci Balikcisi 9

Bosphorus Dining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BEŞIKTAŞ
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Cendere C.
Barbaros C.
Sanayi C.
Galata Deresi C.
İsmet İnönü C.
Çilekli C.
Ebulula Mardin C.
Tepecik Yolu
Nispetiye C.
Küçük Bebek C.
Bebek Ykş.
Yahya Kemal C.
Fatih Sultan Mehmet Köprüsü
Cengiz Topel C.
Sezai Bey S.
Sakıp Sabancı C.
Manço C.
Barış
Körfez C.
Kandilli-Göksu C.
Vaniköy C.
Kuleli C.
Kalantor S.
Yalıboyu C.
Dereboyu C.
Sekbanlar S.
Ahmet Adnan Saygun C.
Bebek C.
Amavutköy
Leylak S.
Barbaros B.
Muallim Naci C.
Boğaziçi Köprüsü Yolu
Palanga C.
Yildiz Parkı
Çırağan C.
Boğaziçi (Bosphorus)
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0-2
Banyan 1
Feriyer Lokantasi 2
Müzedechanga 3
Poseidon 4
Rumeli Iskele 5
Sade Kahve 6
Sunset Grill & Bar 7
The House Café 8
Zuma Istanbul 9

Istanbul Dining A to Z

★★ **Asitane** EDIRNEKAPI

OTTOMAN Here's a good way to find out what the sultans ate, with menus based on palace archives. Try specialty lamb casserole with apricots, almonds and honey, or baked melon stuffed with lamb, veal and pistachios, reflecting Arab and Mediterranean fusion cuisine. Located next to the Kariye Museum (see p 20), its dining room is simple, the garden lovely in summer. *6 Kariye Camii Sok.* ☎ *0212 534 8414. www.asitanerestaurant.com. Entrées 20–35YTL. AE, MC, V. Lunch and dinner daily. Bus: 87. Map p 106.*

★★ **kids** **Bab-i Hayat** EMINONU

TURKISH Probably the area's best bet for a good-value feed, this fresco-filled restaurant opened in 2007 and is popular with local office workers, especially for lunch. From

Bab-i Hayat, a restored warehouse in the Spice Market.

window-seats overlooking Misir Çarşisi's stalls, feast on *hunka begendil kabab* (lamb stew with eggplant puree). Kids will enjoy the lunch buffet's selection. ***39/47 Misir Çarşisi. ☎ 0212 520 7878. www.babihayat.com. Entrées 10–15YTL, V. Breakfast, lunch and dinner daily. Tram: Sultanahmet. Map p 106.***

★★ **Balikci Sabahattin** SULTANAHMET *SEAFOOD* This family-run restaurant in a traditional house is complete with dark wooden floors, pretty kilims, and a fabulous fish menu that brings middle-class Istanbullus flocking. Start with octopus salad or jumbo shrimps to get you in the mood for grilled fresh fish. Summers see tables spill out onto the peaceful courtyard. Reservations recommended. ***1 Cankurtaran Cad. ☎ 0212 458 1824. www.balikcisabahattin.com. Entrées 30–45 YTL. MC, V. Lunch and dinner daily. Tram to Sultanahmet or train to Cankurtaran. Map p 106.***

★ **Banyan** ORTAKÖY *ASIAN FUSION* With a huge terrace for summer (plus heaters) and a stylish dining area for winter, Banyan has been a real hit since opening in 2004, with fresh Asian fusion food. Try the sake-marinated char-grilled fillet mignon, steamed seabass in banana leaves, or satay selection, accompanied by fruity cocktails. Weekends are busy, especially summer nights. Stylish and fun. ***3 Salhane Sok, Muallim Naci Cad. ☎ 0212 259 9060. www.banyanrestaurant.com. Entrées 31–42YTL. AE, MC, V. Lunch and dinner daily. Bus/boat: Ortaköy. Map p 107.***

Banyan's stylish terrace.

★★ **Boncuk** BEYOĞLU *ARMENIAN/TURKISH* One of many *meyhanes* (traditional restaurants) on noisy Nevizade Sokak, this has distinct Armenian flavors as well as favorite Turkish *mezes*. You'll find many *mezes* have a nutty addition to their ingredients. Perennially popular, try the (noisy) street-level tables or slightly quieter terrace, and check with the waiters for the freshest fish of the day. ***19 Nevizade Sok. ☎ 0212 243 1219. Entrées 15–20 YTL. MC, V. Bus/funicular: Taksim. Map 105.***

★ **Brasserie Nişantaşi** NIŞANTAŞI *EUROPEAN* The perfect respite between chi chi boutiques, the über stylish terrace is the place to be seen with your new purchases. Sip a glass of wine with pasta, or nibble a healthy salad from the mirrored bar with huge chandelier. Perfect style and make-up, and that's just the staff. ***23 Abdi Ipekçi Cad. ☎ 0212 343 0443. Entrées 15–25YTL. AE, MC, V. Métro: Bourse. Map p 105.***

★ **Café du Levant** HASKÖY *FRENCH* A cozy hideaway bistro by the Rami Koç Museum (see p 43), the flower-filled bar, art nouveau posters and photo-laden walls set the scene for top-notch French cuisine. Feast on *bonfile* with mushrooms followed by (of course) crème brulée for a decadent,

Cafe du Levant's French style.

romantic evening. ***2 Kumbarhane Cad. ☎ 0212 369 6607. Entrées 22–40YTL. AE, DC, MC, V. Lunch and dinner, Mon–Sat. Bus 54HT; ferry to Hasköy. Map p 105.***

★★ **Canim Ciğerim** ASMALIMESCIT *KEBABS* No menu here, as this simple restaurant is known only for liver kebabs from Mersin in south Turkey, finely skewered and barbecued, served with mounds of fresh salad and bread. Friendly and cheap, it attracts a wide range of loyal customers. ***1 Minare Sok. ☎ 0212 252 6060. Entrées 10–15YTL. Lunch and dinner daily. Tunnel: Tünel. Map p 105.***

★ **kids** **Cankurtaran Sosyal Tesisleri** *CANKURTARAN TURKISH* It sounds unglamorous — part of a council-run social club — but this is great value, complete with white tablecloths and smart waiters. With a large terrace overlooking the Marmara (ignore the main road) you can feast on *mezes* and standard Turkish dishes, like *duğun corbasi* ('wedding' soup) and dolma (stuffed vine leaves). (No alcohol.) ***1 Ahirkapi Iskele Sok. ☎ 0212 458 5414. Entrées 8–12 YTL. MC, V. Lunch and dinner daily. Tram to Sultanahmet or train to Cankurtaran. Map p 106.***

★★ **kids** **Cezayir** GALATASARAY *MODERN TURKISH* This 100-year-old building once housed an Italian school, now a stylishly laid-back restaurant with a popular tree-filled garden terrace in summer. Traditional dishes are given a contemporary feel, like seabass cerviche with anchovies, and smoked salmon with dried rose petals. ***16 Hayriye Cad. ☎ 0212 245 9980. www.cezayir-istanbul.com. Entrées 16–30YTL. AE, DC, MC, V. Breakfast, lunch and dinner daily. Bus/metro: Taksim. Map p 105.***

★★★ **Doğa Balik** CIHANGIR *TURKISH* A real hit with locals, this terrace seafood restaurant does grilled fish in season, plus a fantastic range of greens (rarely seen in Turkish restaurants!) like sorrel, endives and spinach root salad. ***7/F Hotel Villa Zurich, 46 Arkarsu Yokusu. ☎ 0212 243 3656. www.dogabalik.com.tr. Entrées 20–35YTL. MC, V. Lunch and dinner daily. Bus/Metro: Taksim, then walk. Map p 105.***

★ **Dubb** SULTANAHMET *INDIAN* At the city's best Indian restaurant, and one of Sultanahmet's few decent restaurants, carnivores will love the mixed kebabs, plenty of vegetarian dishes and tandoori sea bream. Set meals give you a chance

Freshest of seafood at Doğa Balik.

to taste several dishes. With Indian art on ochre walls and tiled floors, the terrace is fabulous for summer evenings, overlooking Haghia Sophia (see p 7). ***10 Incili Çavuş Sok, Alemdar Mah.* ☎ *0212 513 7308. www.dubbindian.com. Entrées 15–22YTL; set meal 31 YTL. AE, MC, V. Daily lunch and dinner. Tram: Sultanahmet. Map p 106.***

★★★ **Feriyer Lokantasi** ORTAKÖY *OTTOMAN/ TURKISH* This waterfront venue with outdoor tables and a heated pavilion in winter, serves Ottoman dishes with contemporary twist, like roasted pomegranate-glazed duck or octopus with cinnamon. The terrace is loved by visiting celebs for the view of Ortaköy's mosque and Bosphorus Bridge. A great choice for a romantic treat; reservations highly recommended. ***40 Cirağan Cad.* ☎ *0212 227 2216. www.feriye.com. Entrées 25–35YTL. AE, DC, MC, V. Lunch and dinner daily. Bus/boat: Ortaköy. Map p 107.***

★★★ **Gaja** MAÇKA *MODERN EUROPEAN* Superb views from the Swissotel's rooftop (see p 147), which has a cozy and romantic feel. The short menu has seasonal dishes with a couple of meat, fish and seafood options, perhaps steak in red wine sauce, or seared salmon. Everything is beautifully presented, with imaginative desserts ending the meal perfectly. Booking essential; indoor seating in winter. ***Swissotel the Bosphorus, Bayildim Cad.* ☎ *0212 326 1100. www.istanbul.swissotel.com. Entrées 35–60 YTL. AE, DC, MC, V. Daily dinner, summer months only. Metro or bus to Taksim, then taxi. Map p 105.***

★ **kids** **Haci Baba** TAKSIM *TURKISH* Originally the priests' living quarters for adjacent Aya Triyada church (see p 53), the back section has fantastic murals, and the original fountain that spouted wine for booze-loving priests. Try traditional Ottoman dishes like lamb shank with eggplant; friendly staff will point out dishes to help you choose. ***39 Istiklal Cad.* ☎ *0212 244 1886. Entrées 18–25YTL. AE, MC, V. Daily 11am–1am. Bus/Metro: Taksim. Map p 105.***

★★ **kids** **Hala** BEYOĞLU *GÖZLEME* This is my favorite place for *gözleme* (stuffed pancakes) with meat, spinach, or potatoes. A great lunch spot, there are good choices for vegetarians, like *hingal*, (potato-filled ravioli), plus *mercimek* (lentil soup) and *çoban salata* (shepherd's salad) for a filling and cheap pit-stop. ***26 Çukurlu Çeşme Sok, off Büyük Parmakkapi Sok.* ☎ *0212 293 7531. Entrées 4–10 YTL. AE, MC, V. Lunch and dinner daily. Bus, or tram/funicular to Taksim. Map p 105.***

★ **Hamdi Et Lokantasi** EMINÖNÜ *TURKISH* Although popular with tour-groups, try and book a seat with that unbeatable Bosphorus view. Spread over four floors, Hamdi has a fabulous selection of kebabs from southeast Turkey, including house specialties *erikli kebap* (minced sucking lamb) and *testi kebap* stew for groups of ten. Settle inside for your coffee and baklava, baked downstairs. *17 Kalçin Sok, Tahmis Cad. ☎ 0212 528 0390. www.hamdirestorant.com.tr. Entrées 12–20 YTL. MC, V. Lunch and dinner daily. Tram: Eminönü. Map p 106.*

★ **Hünkar** NIŞANTAŞI TURKISH This is where stylish Nişantaşi meets an earthy lokanta. Traditional dishes include lamb shank with smoked eggplant purée and *köfte* (meatballs), and if you need some recommendations the staff are happy to advise. The large dining room spills out onto a tiny, pretty patio. *21 Mimar Kemal Öke Cad. ☎ 0212 225 4665. www.hunkartr.com. Entrées 16–21YTL. Lunch and dinner daily. Minibus: Nişantaşi (from Taksim). Map p 105.*

★★ kids **Kafe Ara** GALATASARAY *BISTRO* I never get bored of gazing at the walls here, adorned with scenic photographs by Istanbul ace Ara Güler (who dines here most lunchtimes). Inside gets buzzing on chilly evenings with cultured locals of all ages feasting on pasta and *köfte*, with the large courtyard a real bonus. *8 Tosbaga Sok, off Yenicarsi Cad. ☎ 0212 245 4105. Entrées 10–18YTL. MC, V. Breakfast, lunch and dinner daily. Bus/tram: Taksim, then walk. Map p 105.*

★★ **Istanbul Modern Café & Restaurant** TOPHANE *MODERN EUROPEAN* Attached to the fantastic museum (see p 17), afternoon sees ladies-who-lunch dining on the terrace on risotto or home-made linguini. When evenings heat up, there's hardly space on the terrace. For those chilly nights, the bar faces a long mirrored wall so no one needs miss a thing. Fish is pricey; meat dishes are better value. *4 Antrepo, Liman Işletmeleri Sahasi, Meclis-I Mebusan Cad. ☎ 0212 292 2612. www.istanbulmodern.org. Entrées 15–56YTL. AE, DC, MC, V. Breakfast, lunch and dinner Mon-Sat; breakfast and lunch Sun. Tram: Tophane. Map p 105.*

★★ **Leb-I Derya (Richmond)** BEYOĞLU *TURKISH/INTERNATIONAL* Sixth floor and glass-fronted with panoramic views, this stylish restaurant is famed for its 40-spiced beef fillet, plus international dishes like lime and ginger chicken. The slick white bar serves fresh fruit cocktails, open till late, served by young, white-clad, and improbably trendy staff. *6/F Richmond Hotel, 227 Istiklal Cad. ☎ 0212 243 4375. www.lebiderya.com. Entrées 25–40 YTL. AE, MC, V. Lunch and dinner daily. Map p 105.*

★ **Lokanta** TEPEBAŞI *EUROPEAN* Housed in the renovated French Pasaj known as Nu Pera, this winter-only restaurant (see *Nu Teras* for summer) has a contemporary yet cozy interior on a quiet street. Try the moules Marinere and braised lamb shank, and watch the bar lights subtly change color. (No, you haven't been drinking too much.) Relaxed and stylish with friendly service, this transforms into a club at weekends. *149/1 Mesrutiyet Cad. ☎0212 245 6039.www.istanbulti.com. Entrées 22–35YTL. AE, MC, V. Dinner daily. Closed mid May–early Oct. Bus: Tepebaşi. Map 105.*

★★ kids **Lokanta Helvetia** TÜNEL *TURKISH* Cozy, with exposed brick walls and large wooden tables, this is popular for its reasonable prices. As a vegetarian, I love a plate of delicious mixed hot and cold dishes like potato with lentils or roast peppers in oil, and carnivores have a good choice of chicken and lamb dishes. Great for those who love Tünel's trendiness but can't afford it, think quick filling meal rather than lingering dinner.

The funky bar at Lokanta.

12 General Yazgan Sok. ☎ *0212 245 8780. Entrées 10–15YTL. No CCs. Daily lunch and dinner. Tunnel: Tünel. Map p 105.*

★★★ kids **Melekler** TAKSIM *OCAKBAŞI* A no-frills barbecue joint with tables on the pavement, the Antakya-born owner serves up the freshest of grilled kebabs. Try spicy Urfa or milder Adana (lamb) kebab, or good old chicken wings, with piles of salad and fresh bread. Probably the cheapest dinner in town. *113 Ipek Sok, off Küçük Parmakkapi Sok.* ☎ *0212 243 0585. Entrées 5–8YTL; no CC. Lunch and dinner daily. Bus or metro/funicular: Taksim. Map p 105.*

★★ **Mikla** TEPEBAŞI *TURKISH/ SCANDANAVIAN* Ascend the Marmara Pera Hotel elevator to the terrace and some superb Scandinavian/Turkish fusion cuisine, heavy on meat but not on the stomach. Decked out in chic black and pale wood, with two levels of terrace tables with Golden Horn views, finish up with after-dinner cocktails by the pool to the in-house DJ's soothing sounds. The late-night bar is popular with wealthy thirtysomethings at weekends. Reservations recommended. *167 Mesrutiyet Cad.* ☎ *0212 293 5656. www.istanbulyi.com. Entrées 35–50 YTL. AE, MC, V. Lunch and dinner Mon–Sat. Bus to Tepebaşi. Map p 105.*

★ **Moreish** TEPEBAŞI *MODERN EUROPEAN* Co-owner of this fine-dining restaurant, Coşkun Uysal is one of Turkey's rising stars, who cut his teeth at Jamie Oliver's 'Fifteen'. Opened in November 2007, his experimental cuisine introduces lamb with jasmine tea jelly and pan-fried red mullet with truffle mousse. Über-stylish décor with white walls and a splash of contemporary art; DJs from Nu Teras (see p 124) play at weekends to well-heeled foodies. *67 Mesrutiyet Cad.* ☎ *0212 245 6089. www.moreishrestaurant.com. Entrées 20–35YTL. Lunch Mon–Fri; dinner Mon–Sat. Closed Jun–Sept. Bus: Tepebaşi. Map p 105.*

★★ **Müzedechanga** EMIRGAN *TURKISH /MEDITERRENEAN* Oozing style, with open kitchen and huge windows, the best feature of this restaurant, attached to the Sabanci Museum, with exhibits of calligraphy, is the huge terrace. With light lunchtime dishes, it's all gourmet food for dinner (think grilled lamb loin with quince sauce) changing seasonally, making it a hit since opening in late 2005. *Sakip Sabanci Müzesi, Atli Kosk, 22 Sakip Sabanci Cad.* ☎ *0212 323 0901. www.changa-istanbul.com. Entrées 22–49YTL. AE, DC, MC, V. Lunch and dinner Tues–Sun. Bus: Emirgan. Map p 107.*

★ **Nu Teras** TEPEBAŞI *EUROPEAN* Summer months see Lokanta (see p 111) decamp to this rooftop restaurant. Enjoy eye-popping Bosphorus views with great *mezes*, pizza, and pasta around the open kitchen. *149/1 Mesrutiyet Cad.* ☎ *0212 245 6070. www.istanbulyi.com. Entrées 22–35YTL. AE, MC, V. Dinner daily. Closed early Oct–mid May. Bus: Tepebaşi. Map p 105.*

★★ **kids** **Özsüt** BEYOĞLU *DESSERTS* Cakes, puddings, ice-creams…the menu at this popular café is lengthy and fabulous. Great for a post-dinner coffee and dessert—*aşure* topped with dried fruit and chopped almonds is wonderful—grab a balcony seat overlooking Istiklal Caddesi. Other city-wide branches are around town. *206 Istiklal Cad.* ☎ *292 9678. Desserts 7–15YTL. MC, V. Morning to late night daily. Map p 105.*

★ **kids** **Poseidon** BEBEK *FISH* Treat yourselves on the waterfront in Istanbul's posh neighborhood for fresh fish, usually simply grilled or fried. Kick off with grilled calamari and go for anything in season. Check with the waiters, who will advise you whether prices on the menu are per portion or per kilo. *58 Cevdetpaşa Cad.* ☎ *0212 263 3823. Entrées 38–60YTL. AE, DC, MC, V. Lunch and dinner daily. Bus: Bebek. Map p 107.*

★ **Rumeli Café** SULTANAHMET *BRASSERIE* Spread over four tiny floors, two with open fires, this friendly restaurant with brick and terracotta walls has Turkish dishes like chicken with rice, raisins, and pine-nuts, and international choices including risotto. A print house until renovated in 1994, winter evenings are snug and candlelit, summers see everyone trying for the tiny terrace. *8 Ticarethabe Sok, off Divan Yolu.* ☎ *0212 512 0008. www.rumeli-cafe.com. Entrées 15–25 YTL. AE, MC, V. Daily lunch and dinner. Tram: Sultanahmet. Map p 106.*

★ **Rumeli Iskele** RUMELI HISARI *FISH* Fish is always pricey in Istanbul, good fish even more so. But this perennially popular restaurant is loved by well-heeled locals, for rich *mezes* and simple fried fish or hearty *bugulama* (fish stew). Book a waterfront table for a touch of romance. *1 Yahya Kemal Cad.* ☎ *0212 263 2997. www.rumelihisariiskele.com.tr. Entrées 40–75YTL. AE, MC, V. Lunch and dinner daily. Bus: 25. Map p 107.*

★★ **kids** **Sade Kahve** SARIYER *CAFÉ/TURKISH* A charming homely café in a 200-year-old wooden house, 'village' breakfast is served all day, including clotted cream, fresh eggs and grilled peppers; evening menu includes local favorites like *manti* (ravioli) and *köfte* (meatballs). The street-level is semi-alfresco for summer, and

Once a printing house, now Rumeli Café.

houses many of the owner's collectables, like wooden furniture and ceramic nick-nacks. ***36A Yahya Kemal Cad.*** *☎ **0212 358 2324. Entrées 15YTL. Daily breakfast, lunch and dinner. Bus: 25. Map p 107.***

★ **Saf** TEPEBAŞI *ORGANIC/RAW* A branch of the famous US Saf (the Turkish for Pure) this is perfect for a tasty detox from all those kebabs, as everything here is organic, raw (or cooked under 48°) and unbelievably healthy. Tasty wraps, *maki* rolls, fresh juices, and cakes are all vegan and seasonal. ***70 Mesrutiyet Cad.*** *☎ **0212 245 7870. www.safrestaurant.com.tr. Wraps 10–15YTL. MC, V. Oct–Apr; lunch and dinner daily. Bus: Tepebaşi. Map p 105.***

★ kids **Seasons** SULTANAHMET *TURKISH* Even if you can't afford a night here, enjoy a romantic (but pricey) dinner in the garden's glass-walled gazebo. It might lack local atmosphere, but the quality of seasonal dishes is good. Typical choices include thyme-roast chicken or fresh seafood pasta. A children's menu is also available. ***1 Tevkifhane Sok.*** *☎ **0212 638 8200. www.fourseasons.com/istanbul. Entrées 30–45 YTL. AE, DC, MC, V. Breakfast, lunch and dinner daily. Tram: Sultanahmet. Map p 106.***

★★ **Sirkeci Balikcisi** SIRKECI *SEAFOOD* This new fish restaurant keeps prices down but doesn't lack quality. On a quiet side-street with a few outdoor tables and rooftop terrace in summer, the assorted fish platter is a great way to kick off. Then choose from freshly caught fish, served grilled, fried or steamed. Simple and delicious, with good service. ***5 Taya Hatun Sok.*** *☎ **0212 528 4344. www.sirkecibalikcisi.com. Entrées 20–30YTL. MC, V. Lunch and dinner daily. Tram: Sirkeci. Map p 106.***

★★ **Sofyali 9** ASMALIMESCIT *TURKISH* One of the best *meyhanes* in the area, this is a cozy place with a charming host, mustard-walled interior and small terrace with outdoor heaters. Away from the crowds, you can enjoy hot and cold *mezes* like my favorite *semizotu* (purslane in garlicky yoghurt) and *dolma* (peppers stuffed with meat) washed down with local Efes beer. ***9 Sofyali Sok.*** *☎ **0212 245 0362. www.sofyali.com.tr. Entrées 25-40 YTL. AE, MC, V. Lunch and dinner Mon–Sat. Bus to Tepebaşi. Map p 105.***

★★★ **Sunset Grill & Bar** ULUS *INTERNATIONAL* With a stunning hill-top location in Ulus Park, Sunset is always full, with superb dishes ranging from sushi, seabass and T-bone steak. The menu caters for locals wanting modern European and visitors prefering to try traditional Ottoman cuisine. The decked terrace is perfect on summer evenings; daytimes see business lunches and wealthy ladies. ***Adnan Saygun Cad, Yol Sok, Ulus Park.*** *☎ **0212 287 0358. www.sunsetgrillbar.com. Entrées 50–75 YTL. AE, DC,***

Sade Kahve, in a 200-year-old wooden house.

Afyet Olsen!

Istanbul is improving its range and quality of international cuisine from Japanese to French, but you'll be sampling many dishes from throughout Turkey. Especially in *meyhanes* (traditional restaurants), meat and fish meals usually kick off with *mezes* (hot or cold starters): try *börek* (hot filled pastries), *patlıcan soslu* (smoked eggplant puree), *dolma* (stuffed vine leaves) or the wonderful *ezme* (spicy tomato dip). Fresh fish is usually grilled or fried (waiters will advise on the freshest). Kebabs from around the country include *patlican kebap* (cubed meat grilled with eggplant), *Iskender kebap* (lamb on *pide* bread (like naan) with yoghurt and tomato sauce) and of course many varieties of *köfte* (meatballs). As a vegetarian, I love *Imam bayeldi* (stuffed eggplant with tomato and onions) and seasonal varieties of *zeytinyağli* (vegetables cooked slowly in olive oil). End dinner with *baklava* and fresh fruit, and wash it down with *raki* (local aniseed liquor). *Şerefe*! (Most people will wish you '*afyet olsen*', the local equivalent of bon appetite.)

MC, V. lunch Mon–Sat; dinner daily. Taxi. Map p 107.

★★ kids **Sütiş** TAKSIM *TURKISH* My favorite for an all-day breakfast of *menemen* (sloppy egg dish with tomatoes and peppers). Although it has a fabulous ornate ceiling, this isn't as formal as it looks, with standard Turkish dishes like kebabs, soups and salads. Try a table by the upstairs window overlooking Istiklal Caddesi. ***7 Istiklal Caddesi. ☎ 0212 251 3270. Entrées 8–12 YTL. MC, V. Lunch and dinner daily. Bus or tram/ funicular: Taksim. Map p 105.***

★★ kids **The House Café** ORTAKÖY *BISTRO/ EUROPEAN* With several (and more opening) branches city-wide, this is the best, with chic and informal dining area and vast waterfront terrace. Think stylish comfort food, with innovative pizzas and salads plus children's menu, and delicious brunch like Eggs Benedict. Popular with upmarket bohemian locals, especially for after-work cocktails—delicious! Weekends see the bar pumping till dawn. ***1 Salhane Sok. ☎ 0212 227 2699. www.thehousecafe.com.tr. Entrées 20–30YTL. AE, MC, V. Breakfast, lunch and dinner daily. Bus/boat: Ortaköy. Map p 107.***

★★★ **Topaz** GÜMÜŞSUYU *MEDITERRANEAN* Opened in late 2007, floor-to-ceiling windows have staggering Bosphorus views, with a menu to match. Dishes favor meat and fish, expertly cooked and presented with lovely service. Guest chefs bring their own individual cuisine to the menu, and the in-house DJ plays just the right level and mood of music. ***50 Inönü Cad. ☎ 0212 249 1001. www.topazistanbul.com. Entrées 30–50YTL. AE, DC, MC, V Lunch and dinner daily. Bus/Metro: Taksim. Map p 105.***

★★ **Vogue** AKARETLER *SUSHI/ INTERNATIONAL* With Bosphorus views from a rooftop terrace, this is where the beautiful people dine on top sushi. Settle on the terrace's soft white seats (indoors in winter)

Food and Drink Basics

ENGLISH	TURKISH	PRONUNCIATION
Breakfast	kahvaltı	*kah-valtuh*
Lunch	öğle yemeği	*ur-leh yeme-i*
Dinner	akşam yemeği	*aksham yeme-i*
Beer	bira	*bira*
Soft drinks	meşrubatlar	*meshrubatlar*
Mineral water	su	*su*
Starters (assorted)	meze	*meh-zeh*
Red/white wine	kırmızı/beyaz şarap	*kurmu-zu/beyaz sharap*
Dessert	tatlı	*tat-lu*
Fish	balık	*baluk*
Aubergine	patlıcan	*pat-lu-jan*
Chicken	tavuk	*tavuk*
Meat	et	*et*
Eggs	yumurta	*yumurta*
Beans	fasulye	*fasul-yeh*
Bread	ekmek	*ekmek*
White cheese	peynir	*peynir*
Anchovy	hamsi	*hamsi*
Fried	tava	*tava*
Grilled	izgara	*izgara*
Tomato	domates	*do-mah-tes*
Savoury pastries	börek	*burek*
Meatballs	köfte	*kuf-teh*
Vegetables w/olive oil	zeytinyağli	*zeytin-yarluh*
Turkish coffee	Türk kahve	*Turk kar-veh*
Tea	çay	*chay*
Juice	suyu	*su-yu*
(Lentil) soup	(mercimek) çorba	*(mer-ji-mek) chorba*
Rice	pilav	*pilav*
Salad	salata	*salata*
The bill, please	Hesap, lütfen	*hesap, lutfen*

with contemporary cuisine, like braised zucchini rolls and hot chestnut cake; Sunday buffet brunch is a highlight. Reservations essential. *13/F, 48 BJK Plaza, A-Blok, Spor Cad . ☎ 0212 227 2545. www.istanbuldoors.com. Entrées 30–60 YTL. AE, DC, MC, V. Lunch and dinner daily. Bus to Beşiktaş. Map p 105.*

★★ **Zuma Istanbul** ORTAKÖY *JAPANESE* This top-notch new restaurant imported from London fits well into Ortaköy's trendy dining scene, and one for a splurge; try the tasting menu or select from crispy-fried squid or miso black cod. The first floor opens onto a terrace, with sushi bar and Japanese robati grill, all earthy wood tones and sleek sofas. Dress to impress; reservations essential. *7 Salhane Sok. ☎ 0212 236 2296. www.zumarestaurant.com. Entrées 25–60 YTL. AE, DC, MC, V. Lunch and dinner daily. Bus/boat: Ortaköy. Map p 107.* ●

7

The Best Nightlife

Keyif
Restaurant
DEMGAH
EFES Pilsen
EFES Pilsen
EFES Pilsen
Akder
EFES Pilsen

Nightlife Best Bets

Best **Fairy-Lights**
★★ K.V, *10 Tünel Geçidi (p 121)*

Best **Leafy Courtyard**
★★ Cezayir, *16 Hayriye Cad. (p 122)*

Best for **Wine & Cheese**
★★ Pano Şeraphanesi, *4 Kalyoncu Kulluk Cad (p 121)*

Best **Gay Nightclub**
★★ Tek Yon, *14 Ekrem Türk Sok (p 126)*

Best for **Rock Fans**
★★ Kemanci, *33 Siraselviler Cad. (p 124)*

Best for **Cutting–Edge Music**
★★ Dogzstar, *3/F 22 Tosbağa Sok (p 124)*

Best **Home Brewed Beer**
★★ Balans, *22 Balo Sok. (p 124)*

Best for **Watching the Water**
★★★ Dersaadet, *Yeni Galata Koprüsü (p 122)*

Best **Terrace for Sipping Cocktails**
★★ 360Istanbul, *9/F 163 Istiklal Cad (p 123)*

Best **Waterfront Boogie**
★★ Angelique, *5 Salhane Sok, (p 124)*

Best **Tünel Hideaway**
★★★ Badehane, *5 General Yazgan Sok (p 120)*

Best **Bohemian Enclave**
★★ Meyra, *46 Akarsu Cad (p 123)*

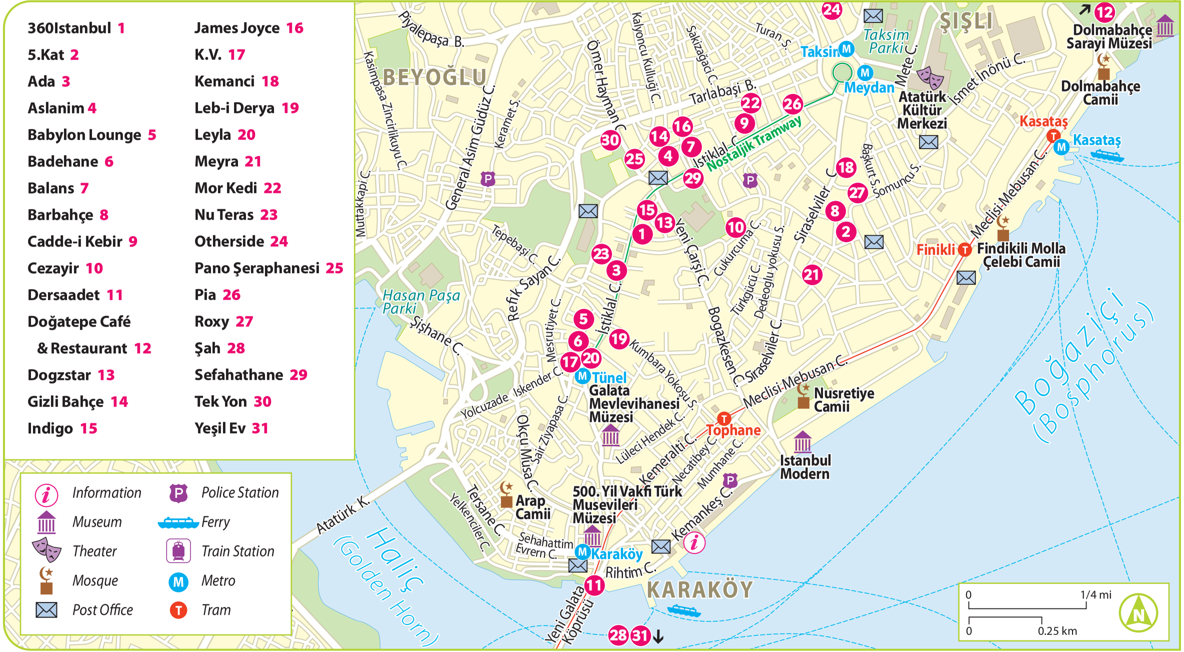
Best **Theatrical Décor**
★★ 5.Kat, *5/F 7 Soganci Sok (p 120)*

Best for a **No-Nonsense Beer**
★ Aslanim, *22 Nevizade Sok. (p 120)*

Kemanci—more a rock scene than just a venue.

Beyoğlu Nightlife

360Istanbul 1
5.Kat 2
Ada 3
Aslanim 4
Babylon Lounge 5
Badehane 6
Balans 7
Barbahçe 8
Cadde-i Kebir 9
Cezayir 10
Dersaadet 11
Doğatepe Café
& Restaurant 12
Dogzstar 13
Gizli Bahçe 14
Indigo 15
James Joyce 16
K.V. 17
Kemanci 18
Leb-i Derya 19
Leyla 20
Meyra 21
Mor Kedi 22
Nu Teras 23
Otherside 24
Pano Şeraphanesi 25
Pia 26
Roxy 27
Şah 28
Sefahathane 29
Tek Yon 30
Yeşil Ev 31


ŞIŞLI
BEYOĞLU
KARAKÖY
Boğaziçi (Bosphorus)
Haliç (Golden Horn)
Dolmabahçe Sarayi Müzesi
Dolmabahçe Camii
Kasataş
Taksim
Taksim Parki
Meydan
Atatürk Kültür Merkezi
Fındıkılı Molla Çelebi Camii
Finikli
Nusretiye Camii
Istanbul Modern
Tophane
Galata Mevlevihanesi Müzesi
Tünel
500. Yil Vakfi Türk Musevileri Müzesi
Arap Camii
Karaköy
Hasan Paşa Parki
Nostaljik Tramway
Piyalepaşa B.
Kasimpasa Zincirlikuyu C.
Muttakkapi C.
General Asim Güdüz C.
Keramet S.
Ömer Hayman C.
Kalyoncu Kulluği C.
Sakizağaci C.
Tarlabaşi B.
Turan S.
Mete C.
Ismet Inönü C.
Meclisi-Mebusan C.
Başkurt S.
Somuncu S.
Siraselviler C.
Istiklal C.
Yeni Çarşi C.
Çukurcuma C.
Türkgücü C.
Dedeoglu yokusu S.
Bogazkesen C.
Tepebaşi C.
Refik Sayan C.
Şişhane C.
Mesrutiyet C.
Kumbara Yokoşu S.
Lüleci Hendek C.
Kemeralti C.
Necatibey C.
Mumhane C.
Kemankeş C.
Yolcuzade Iskender C.
Sair Ziyapasa C.
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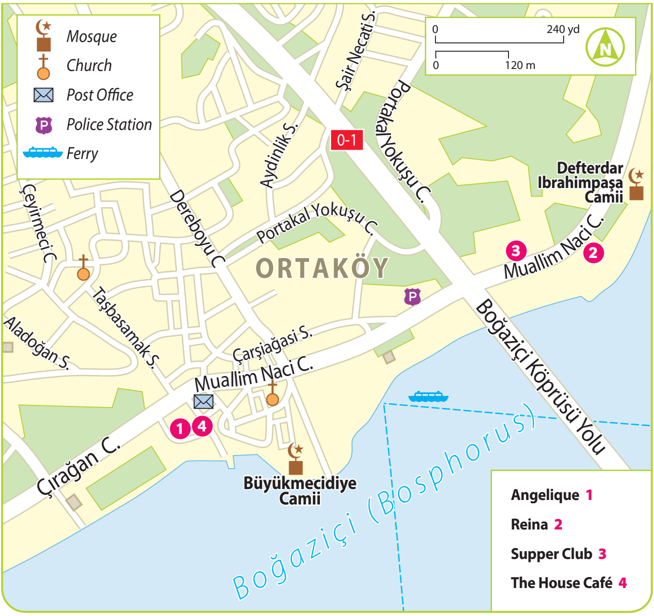
Ortaköy Nightlife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Portakal Yokuşu C.
ORTAKÖY
Muallim Naci C.
Taşbasamak S.
Aladoğan S.
Çarşiağasi S.
Muallim Naci C.
Boğaziçi Köprüsü Yolu
Çırağan C.
Büyükmecidiye Camii
Boğaziçi (Bosphorus)
Angelique 1
Reina 2
Supper Club 3
The House Café 4

Istanbul Nightlife A to Z

Bars

★★ **5.Kat** CIHANGIR One of Istanbul's first venues to capitalize on its view, Beşinci Kat (literally '5th floor') has a small terrace for summer nights. For winter, think deep red walls, purple drapes, beaded curtains, and chandeliers in an arty, gay-friendly bar—a favorite among Istanbul's literati, with actress-owner Yasemin Alkaya watching over the fun. Open till 3am at weekends. *5/F 7 Soganci Sok. www.5kat.com. Metro/bus: Taksim. Map p 119.*

★★ **Aslanim** BEYOĞLU In busy Nevizade, this bar crams tables onto the pavement terrace to watch the crowds. Upstairs, beer-drinking locals enjoy a studenty vibe, with a friendly atmosphere and decent snack menu. *22 Nevizade Sok, Balik Pazari. ☎ 0212 245 6718. www.aslanimrestaurant.com. Bus/metro: Taksim. Map p 119.*

★★★ **Badehane** TÜNEL In this corner bar in a bohemian Tünel alleyway, tables on the streets fill up on summer evenings with beer-drinking young locals. Inside, it's a good-natured squash in winter, especially for the live gypsy clarinet music every Thursday (10pm–1.30am). *5 General Yazgan Sok. ☎ 0212 249 0550. Tunnel: Tünel. Map p 119.*

★ **Gizli Bahçe** BEYOĞLU Not the place for a quiet drink and chat after 9pm, when the jazz-funk cranks up to deafening pitch and cheerful

Gizle Bahçe, just like a comfortable living room.

20-somethings enter the fun, especially at weekends. Homely rather than chic; come for an early evening beer before dinner on Nevizade Sokak, sinking into one of the mismatched armchairs on the open terrace or tiny balcony. *15 Nevizade Sok.* ☎ *0212 249 2192. Bus/metro: Taksim. Map p 119.*

★ **James Joyce** BEYOĞLU If you're dying to watch a Manchester United match on TV, eat a full Irish breakfast, drink Guinness, and surround yourself with 'Oirish' paraphernalia, join young expats and locals at Istanbul's first Irish pub. The terrace fills up on summer nights; winters pack punters inside to hear live bands every night from 10pm. *26 Balo Sok, off Istiklal Cad.* ☎ *0212 244 7970. www.theirishcentre.com. Metro/bus: Taksim. Map p 119.*

★★ **K.V.** TÜNEL In an ornate 19th-century courtyard, K.V. (pronounced 'keh-veh') has outdoor tables amid plants and fairy lights for a touch of romance. When it gets chilly, step inside to the tiny high-ceilinged interior with huge chandeliers and pink neon lighting. Also a popular restaurant, it can be difficult getting a table at weekends, especially with live jazz on Fri and Sat nights. *10 Tünel Geçidi.* ☎ *0212 251 4348. www.kv.com.tr. Tunnel: Tünel. Map p 119.*

★★ **Pano Şeraphanesi.** GALATASARAY Also a lively restaurant, this traditional Greek wine house has good deals on bottles of its own wines (in a city with pricey alcohol). Perch at high tables on the first floor with a plate of cheeses or meats to accompany your drink, or sit outside in summer at pavement tables. *4 Kalyoncu Kulluk Cad.* ☎ *0212 292 6664. www.panosarap.com. Bus/metro to Taksim, then 10-min walk.*

★ **Şah** SULTANAHMET One of the few bars in the area, the main bar is at the end of a courtyard, getting lively in summer with a mix of tourists and locals. There are separate stone-walled partitions with rugs and stools off the courtyard. DJs play European hits every night,

Magical courtyard at K.V.

Get away from the crowds at Yeşil Ev's garden.

creating a real holiday mood. *11 Incili Çavuş Çikmaz Sok.* ☎ *0212 519 5807. www.sahpub.com.tr. Tram: Sultanahmet. Map p 119.*

★ **Sefahathane** BEYOĞLU Tucked away down Atlas Pasaj by the cinema, this tiny bar has rock music, photos on the walls and a laid-back boho atmosphere, refreshingly unpretentious. Come for beers, rather than anything too fancy. *Atlas Pasaji, Istiklal Cad.* ☎ *0212 251 2245. Bus/metro: Taksim. Map p 119.*

★ **Yeşil Ev** SULTANAHMET In the grounds of this rebuilt Ottoman house (see p 148), the leafy garden is a peaceful escape from sightseeing and shopping. A perfect way to start your evening with a glass of wine, although not open late. *5 Kabasakal Cad.* ☎ *0212 517 6785. www.istanbulyesilev.com. Tram: Sultanahmet. Map p 119.*

Café-Bars & Restaurant Bars

★ **Ada** BEYOĞLU Inside Ada bookstore, this café now covers most of the first floor. Good for an early evening beer while listening to their excellent music from around the world, or a coffee while browsing through books. *Open until about 10pm every evening. 158A Istiklal Cad.* ☎ *0212 251 6682. www.adacafebistro.com Bus/metro: Taksim. Map p 119.*

★★ **Babylon Lounge** TÜNEL This cozy café-bar, little brother to the club Babylon, opened in November 2007, ideal as a pre-gig venue or recovering from a hangover. Detox over fresh juices and comfort food—or maybe a cocktail or beer to get the party started. Wooden floorboards, dim lighting, and minimalist décor are easy on the eye. *4 Jurnal Sok, off Asmalilmescit.* ☎ *0212 245 3800. www.babylonlounge-ist.com. Tram/tunnel: Tünel. Map p 119.*

★ **Cadde-i Kebir** TAKSIM One of the cheapest café-bars in the area, this is an unpretentious place with a lovely outside area on the street, perfect for a beer and watching the Istiklal crowds go by. *7 Imam Adnan Sok.* ☎ *0212 244 3372. Bus/metro: Taksim. Map p 119.*

★★ **Cezayir** GALATASARAY This restaurant (see p 109) has a great location and is loved for its garden terrace in summer, with a plant-filled indoor bar and fashionable upstairs bar. This is a real hit with Istanbul's thirty-something nightbirds, especially for its weekend DJ. *16 Hayriye Cad.* ☎ *0212 245 9980.www.cezayir-istanbul.com. Bus/metro: Taksim. Map p 119.*

★ **Doğatepe Café & Restaurant** HISARÜSTÜ Worth the 20-min bus ride from Taksim on hot summer nights. Go for a terrace-edge seat at the pricey bar for views over Rumeli Hisari (see p 45) and the huge Bosphorus bridge. Open daily till 2am. *4-6 Duatepe Parki, Nispetiye Cad.* ☎ *0212 257 4391. www.dogatepe.com.tr. Bus: 599C from Taksim. Map p 119.*

★★★ **Dersaadet** KARAKÖ Nothing overly stylish about this cheerful café-bar, located on Galata bridge. This is the place to kick back with a tea, backgammon, beer, or *nargile* (waterpipe) watching boats cruise the Bosphorus, with music and live football on TV catering, for all tastes. *20 Bogaz Tarafi, Alti Karaköy, Yeni Galata Koprüsü. ☎ 0212 292 7001. Tram: Karaköy. Map p 119.*

★★ **Leb-i Derya** GALATASARAY Although also a restaurant and big brother to Leb-i Derya Richmond (see p 111), its tiny rooftop terrace in this unassuming neighborhood attracts young well-heeled professionals. Hang on to that stool if you find outdoor space or take in the lounge music, liqueur-laced tea, and carefully concocted cocktails. *7/F 57 Kumbaraci Yokuşu. ☎ 0212 293 4989. Bus/metro Taksim, then 10-min walk. Map p 119.*

★★ **Leyla** TÜNEL A new location for an old Cihangir favorite, this café-bar epitomizes Tünel's emerging trendy side. Sink into comfortable armchairs overlooking the square for a cappuccino, or perch on a bar stool facing the huge mirror to see the reflection of beautiful people behind you. A meeting point of bohemians, fashion photographers, and expats. *186 Tünel Meydani. ☎ 0212 245 4028. Tunnel: Tünel. Map p 119.*

★★ **Meyra** CIHANGIR Relaxed and crowded for weekend brunch, this mammoth café/bar is now as popular as its previous incarnation Leyla (see above). Think wooden floors, soft armchairs, and newspapers at weekends. *46 Akarsu Cad. ☎ 0212 244 5350. Bus/metro: Taksim. Map p 119.*

★ **Pia** BEYOĞLU Wooden floors, minimal décor, and creaky stairs to a gorgeous upper floor. The best seats are by the windows opening to the street. This popular café-bar is usually peaceful, a suitable refuge for lone women who don't want to be disturbed. The daily menu is chalked up on the blackboard over the bar, including breakfast and pastas. *4A Bekar Sok, off Istiklal Cad. ☎ 0212 252 7100. www.piasarikahve.com. Metro/bus: Taksim. Map p 119.*

★★ **The House Café** ORTAKÖY Also a restaurant (see p 111) the outdoor decking comes alive on summer evenings. The bar staff love making fruity cocktails, or sip a cold beer while watching the lights on the bridge change color. If it's too chilly, the wooden-floored plant-filled interior is inviting. *1 Salhane Sok. ☎ 0212 227 2699. www.thehousecafe.com.tr. AE, MC, V. Bus/boat: Ortaköy. Map p 119.*

Clubs and DJ Bars

★★ **360Istanbul** BEYOĞLU In newly trendy Misir Apartment (see p 3) this terrace bar-club-restaurant is a hit with fashionistas. Glass walls mean enjoying the views even when it's too cold for the terrace, and at weekends excellent house DJs Sashah and Tekin light up the dance floor until the wee hours. Line your stomach with international cuisine before sampling top cocktails. *9/F*

Fight for the best seats in the house at Leb-i Derya.

Drink Balans's very own brew.

163 Istiklal Cad. ☎ *0212 251 1042. Bus/metro: Taksim. Map p 119.*

★★ **Angelique** ORTAKÖY One of Istanbul's best-loved summer clubs with a Bosphorus-facing terrace, slick bar and restaurant. Forget the weekends (members only); phone ahead for the guest-list on week nights, then dress to get past discerning doormen. A wealthy young crowd parties to Turkish and European pop. International cuisine, including sushi is on the club's decent menu. ***Free entry.*** *5 Salhane Sok, Muallim Naci Cad.* ☎ *0212 327 2844. www.istanbuldoors.com. Bus/boat: Ortakoy. Map p 120.*

★★ **Balans** BEYOĞLU This microbrewery has a bit of everything. With huge brewing paraphernalia inside, regulars eat or watch live football on TV from street-facing tables. Through the back is the club, with DJ nights including techno, dance or house (cover charge varies) or live local bands. *22 Balo Sok, off Istiklal Cad.* ☎ *0212 293 5690. Bus/metro: Taksim. Map p 119.*

★★ **Dogzstar** BEYOĞLU A friendly little club with a mixed crowd and three tiny floors that fill up by midnight (deserted before 11pm) at weekends. House DJs mix some of the edgiest sounds in town, from post-punk and drum-and-bass to electro-rock. From the glass-ceilinged top floor (hot but fully air-conditioned, thankfully) pop downstairs to see a live band, usually something pretty unconventional. *3/F 22 Tosbağa Sok.* ☎ *0212 244 1081. Closed Sun; no cover. Bus/metro: Taksim. Map p 119.*

★ **Indigo** GALATASARAY Electronic techno acts and DJs regularly perform in this club, loved for its great lighting, sound system and laser shows. Hard-core clubbers seek solace in the vast, dark space. Buy advance tickets for popular acts. *1-4 Arkasu Sok, off Istiklal Cad.* ☎ *0212 244 8567. www.livingindigo.com. Cover. Closed June-Sep. Tunnel: Tünel. Map 119.*

★★ **Kemanci** CIHANGIR The garden's fantastic mural make this rock bar a major draw in summer. An Istanbul institution for rock fans, live bands play almost nightly, mainly well-loved UK covers. Otherwise, DJs spins crowd-pleasers ranging from loud to glam rock, to a cross-section of ages. Summer Sundays have afternoon barbecues. *33 Siraselviler Cad.* ☎ *0212 293 6100. Cover charge Fri and Sat 20 YTL. Metro/bus: Taksim. Map p 119.*

★ **Nu Teras** TEPEBAŞ After pizza or pasta (see p 113) the party starts,

Cigarettes and Alcohol

Turks generally smoke like chimneys so a trip to Istanbul's bars, cafés and clubs—especially traditional tea-houses with card-playing men—comes with plumes of smoke. *Nargiles* (fruity waterpipes) have made a resurgence among all ages, including young women. So what happens when the smoking ban hits Turkey on 1 July 2009? (Many Istanbul venues have already introduced a ban, including taxis, malls, offices and hotels.) Bars and clubs will be more pleasant and outside spaces smartened up, although winter months are the test, when venturing outside for a cigarette is a less attractive option. Regular increases in alcohol prices shock me; Istanbul is now on a par with New York and London, mainly due to excessive taxation by the government. For local drinks, Efes beer and Turkish wines are good, but steer clear of domestic vodka and gin. Raki (aniseed liquor) is mixed with water.

when this summer restaurant transforms into a casually fashionable club at weekends (mid May–mid Oct). Enjoy Bosphorus views to house DJ sounds, even better after a few vodka hazelnut shots. ***149/1 Mesrutiyet Cad. ☎0212 245 6070. www.istanbulyi.com. Bus: Tepebaşi. Map p 119.***

★ **Reina** ORTAKÖY More than just a club; movie stars, A–Z-list celebs, and financial whiz kids flock to be seen at this vast entertainment complex. You might get in early in the week (after making reservations) for drinks and music on the terrace bar. Black-suited doormen are notoriously choosy; remember that gaudy (rather than tasteful glamour) is good. During winter the terrace closes and action transfers to the indoor club, decked out in black. Steep cover charge and drinks. ***44 Muallim Naci Cad. ☎ 0212 259 5919. For the bar only, 50 YTL per person (inc one drink). www.reina.com.tr. Boat/bus: Ortaköy. Map p 120.***

★ **Roxy** CIHANGIR A busy club, this has live rock and pop bands nearly every night, attracting a casual bunch of twenty-somethings in its cavernous interior. Yan Gastro bar has snacks and even full meals, like *helim* (halloumi) skewers and seafood lasagna. ***5 Aslanyatagi Sok, Siraselviler Cad. ☎ 0212 249 1283. www.roxy.com.tr. Cover charge. Bus/metro: Taksim. Map p 119.***

★ **Supper Club** ORTAKÖY Latest in the Europe-wide chain, opened in May 2008, where trendy young locals lounge on white sofas and dine on a four-course set meal *à la* candlelight, plus entertainment. Come here for an expensive drink (hopefully the staff will become

White-sofa chic style at Supper Club.

more friendly), a dance on the decking to deep house, or just to recline to the late-night chill-out music bathed in lighting changing colors. *65 Muallim Naci Cad.* ☎ *0212 2611 988. www.supperclub.com. Closed Sun and Mon; no cover. Bus/boat: Ortaköy. Map p 120.*

Gay Nightlife

★ **Barbahçe** CIHANGIR A popular club, packed at weekends, where young good-looking gay guys fill the dance-floor with a distinctly European feel. Look out for the aquarium in the dark chill-out room! On Friday and Saturday nights, the bar at the back is exclusively for lesbians. *3/1 Soğanci Sok, off Siraselviler Cad.* ☎ *0212 245 1718. www.barbahce.com. Wed–Sat. Metro/bus: Taksim. Map p 119.*

★★ **Mor Kedi** TAKSIM A homely café for gays and lesbians only, this is part drop-in center, friendly coffee bar and information point. It's about armchairs, Scrabble and reading newspapers rather than cruisey pick-up joint. The fantastic owner Nihal brews up tea, cooks up comfort food, and gladly helps gay visitors. If you're new in Istanbul and want the low-down on the best clubs or gay-friendly hotels, this is your best starting-point. *3/F 7 Imam Adnan Sok, off Istiklal Cad.* ☎ *0212 244 2592. www.cafemorkedi.com. Bus/metro: Taksim. Map p 119.*

★ **Otherside** TAKSIM Originally a gay restaurant, local gay guys love its chi chi feel, popular as much as a café-bar as a club. Cozy lounges, complete with chandeliers, contrast with the action on the dance floor, usually to popular European dance tracks. Karaoke every Thursday and Friday nights. *11/4 Lamartin Cad.* ☎ *0212 235 7914. www.othersideistanbul.com. Bus/metro: Taksim. Map p 119.*

★★ **Tek Yon** BEYOĞLU New venue for Istanbul's popular gay club, previously the place for local 'bears', it now attracts a more mixed crowd. Gay and straight women would also be welcome, but perhaps not at weekends when things get busy. Loud Turkish and Euro pop are the sounds, with plenty of seats and space for a chat upstairs, until everyone packs onto the dance-floor. Don't think of getting there before midnight. *14 Ekrem Türk Sok.* ☎ *0212 245 1653. www.tekyonclub.com. Bus to Tarlibaşi Bulvari. Map p 119.* ●

Making Friends?

While Istanbul is generally safe, here's a few hints for visitors: avoid the rare scam of a lone male tourist meeting a friendly chap on the street, being invited to 'a great bar' and ending up with ladies at his table and a colossal bar bill. If you're in a seedy club, men should bear in mind that things aren't always as they seem: Women may really be men and, in gay clubs, men could be rent boys. Homosexuality is illegal but tolerated here with many gay bars and clubs. For the newcomer, some gay clubs seem alarming with transvestites, transsexuals, bi, straight, and gay guys galore. The bars and clubs listed above are 'safe', where a lone tourist won't feel out of place. Like most parts of the world, look after your wallet!

8

The Best Arts & Entertainment

Arts & Entertainment Best Bets

Best for **Balkan Fusion Bands**
★★★ Babylon, *3 Şeybender Sok (p 131)*

Best **Strike Action**
★★ Bab Bowling Café, *24 Yeşilcam Sok (p 136)*

Best **Venue for an Orchestra**
★★ Haghia Eirene, *Topkapi Sarayi (p 133)*

Best **Experimental Dance**
★★ garajistanbul, *11A Kaymakam Reşat Bey Sok (p 132)*

Best for **Cozy Jazz Night**
★★ Nardis Jazz Club, *14 Galata Kulesi Sok* (*p* 122)

Best **Goal Celebrations**
Beşiktaş FC, *Inönü Stadium (p 134)*

Best **Music Venue on a Summer Night**
★★ Cemil Topuzlu Açikhava Tiyatrosu, *Harbiye (p 133)*

Best **Place for a Flutter**
★ Veliefendi, *Veliefendi Hipodromu (p 136)*

Best **Funky New Club**
★★ Ghetto, *10 Kalyoncu Kulluk Cad (p 131)*

Best **Spiritual Experience**
★★ Whirling Dervishes, *c/o Les Arts Turcs 3/F 37 Incili Çavuş Sok (p 133)*

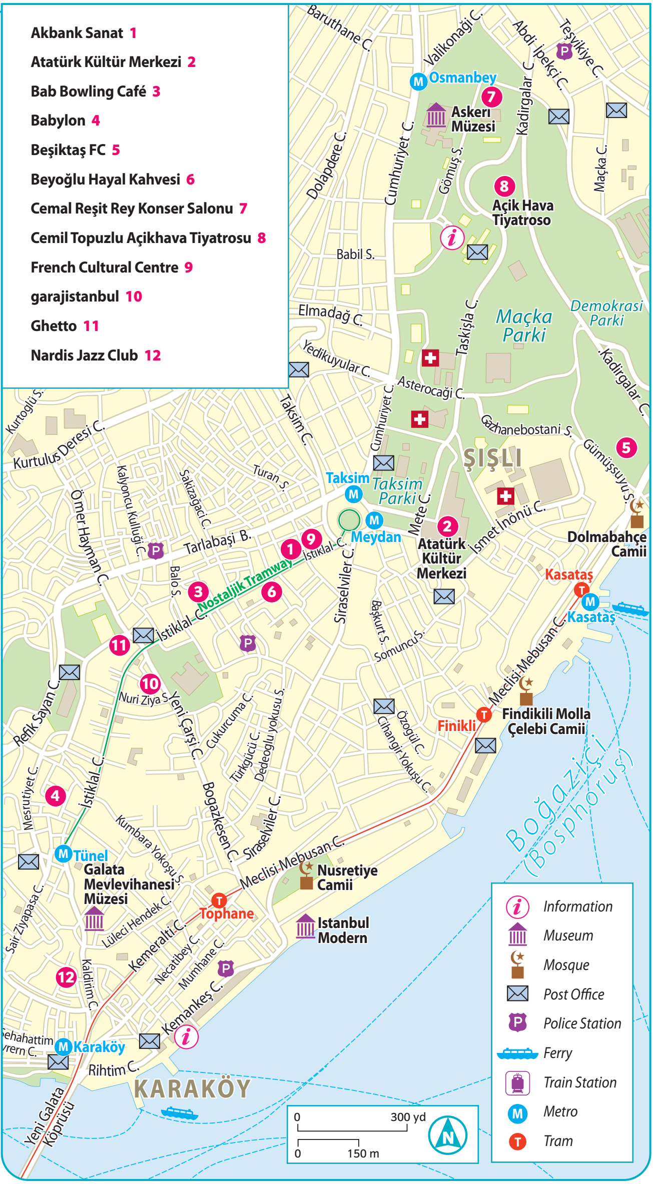
Best **Night at the Opera**
★★ Atatürk Kültür Merkezi, *Taksim Meydani (p 132)*

Have a flutter at Veliefendi racetrack.

GAZİ KOŞUSU

Beyoğlu Arts & Entertainment

Akbank Sanat 1
Atatürk Kültür Merkezi 2
Bab Bowling Café 3
Babylon 4
Beşiktaş FC 5
Beyoğlu Hayal Kahvesi 6
Cemal Reşit Rey Konser Salonu 7
Cemil Topuzlu Açıkhava Tiyatrosu 8
French Cultural Centre 9
garajistanbul 10
Ghetto 11
Nardis Jazz Club 12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Gömüş S.
Maçka C.
Açık Hava Tiyatroso
Babil S.
Elmadağ C.
Taşkışla C.
Maçka Parki
Demokrasi Parki
Yedikuyular C.
Asterocağı C.
Kadirgalar C.
Kurtoğlu S.
Kurtuluş Deresi C.
Taksim C.
Gazhanebostani S.
ŞİŞLİ
Gümüşsuyu S.
Turan S.
Taksim
Taksim Parki
Kalyoncu Kulluği C.
Sakızağacı C.
Ömer Hayman C.
Tarlabaşı B.
İstiklal C.
Meydan
Mete C.
Atatürk Kültür Merkezi
İsmet İnönü C.
Dolmabahçe Camii
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Nostaljik Tramvay
Sıraselviler C.
Kasataş
Başkurt S.
Somuncu S.
Meclisi Mebusan C.
Refik Sayan C.
Nuri Ziya S.
Yeni Çarşı C.
Çukurcuma C.
Dedeoğlu yokuşu S.
Türkgücü C.
Özoğul C.
Cihangir Yokuşu C.
Finikli
Fındıklı Molla Çelebi Camii
Meşrutiyet C.
İstiklal C.
Kumbara Yokuşu S.
Boğazkesen C.
Sıraselviler C.
Boğaziçi (Bosphorus)
Tünel
Galata Mevlevihanesi Müzesi
Meclisi Mebusan C.
Nusretiye Camii
Sair Ziyapaşa C.
Lüleci Hendek C.
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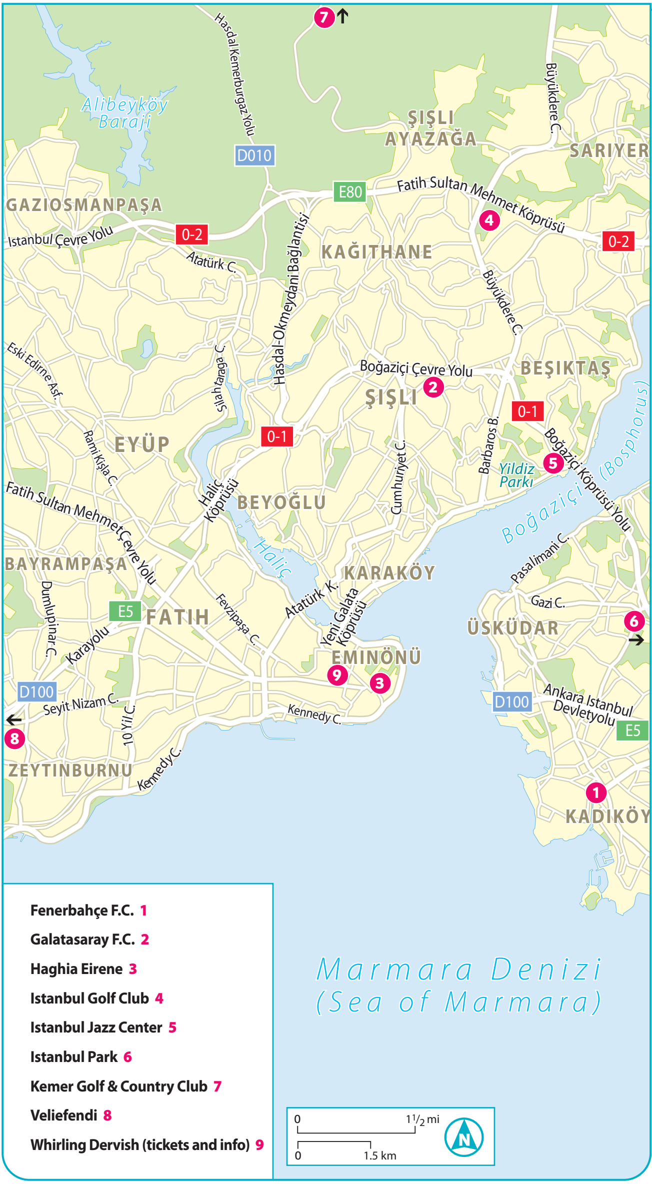
Greater Istanbul A&E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Boğaziçi Köprüsü Yolu
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Yildiz Parki
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BEYOĞLU
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Boğaziçi (Bosphorus)
Haliç
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Fenerbahçe F.C.	1
Galatasaray F.C.	2
Haghia Eirene	3
Istanbul Golf Club	4
Istanbul Jazz Center	5
Istanbul Park	6
Kemer Golf & Country Club	7
Veliefendi	8
Whirling Dervish (tickets and info)	9

Arts & Entertainment **A to Z**

Live Music Venues

Rock & Jazz

★★★ **Babylon** GALATA One of the best music venues in the city, this started out more of a club but has found its niche as a great live music venue. Most of the acts are international, incorporating a range of music genres from nu-jazz to Latin to Balkan gypsy-techno fusion. Guest international DJs give the place a more clubby feel. *3 Şeybender Sok, off Asmalimescit.* ☎ *0212 292 7368. www.babylon.com.tr. Cover charge. Bus/metro Taksim. Map p 129.*

★★ **Beyoğlu Hayal Kahvesi** BEYOĞLU A real local favorite, this venue has live bands most nights, usually Turkish rock and pop acts. The atmosphere is laid-back and grungy, rather than anything too flash, with the program posted outside. *11c Büyükparmikkapi Sok.* ☎ *0212 244 2558. www.hayalkahvesibeyoglu.com. Metro/bus: Taksim. Map p129.*

★★ **Ghetto** GALATASARAY A relative newcomer to the music scene, this little club built in an old bakery hosts live bands, especially roots, progressive, and rock. Recent local and international sounds include Transglobal Underground, Talvin Singh, and the bluesy Nil Karaibrahimgil. A narrow balcony overlooks the stage and crowd. Look out for the monthly program in local book and music shops. *10 Kalyoncu Kulluk Cad.* ☎ *0212 251 7501. www.ghettoist.com. Bus/metro: Taksim. Map p 129.*

★★ **Istanbul Jazz Center** ORTAKÖY Live jazz nightly at a big classy club in Ortaköy, open during winter months only. Boasting an international line-up with stars from US, Europe and South America, there

Babylon attracts international music acts.

babylon
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NO ENTRY

is also a restaurant serving European food and pleasant courtyard. *10 Salhane Sok, off Ciragan Cad. ☎ 0212 327 5050. www.istanbuljazz.com. Tickets from 40 YTL. Bus/boat to Ortaköy. Map p 130.*

★★ **Nardis Jazz Club** GALATA Live music from Turkish and international acts every night in this stone-walled cozy den draws in the jazz fans. The venue was created for local musicians and their friends by the husband-and-wife owners Önder (musician) and Zuhal Focan. Food and drink is pricey, but the small round tables and tiny balcony make it a friendly joint. *14 Galata Kulesi Sok. ☎ 0212 244 63 27. www.nardisjazz.com. Most tickets from 25 YTL. Bus/metro Taksim. Map p 129.*

Dance, Music, and Theater

★★ **Akbank Sanat** BEYOĞLU This privately sponsored cultural center has a small theater, cinema and even its own chamber orchestra (a good example of the benefits of banks sponsoring the arts). Hosting regular local dance groups, concerts, and films, and a prominent venue in the city's arts festivals (see *Savvy Traveler* p 160), its monthly program is displayed in the window. *1 Zambak Sok, off Istiklal Cad. ☎ 0212 252 3500. No credit cards. www.akbanksanat.com. Map p 129.*

Atatürk Kültür Merkezi just before refurbishment.

ATATÜRK KÜLTÜR MERKEZİ

★★ **Atatürk Kültür Merkezi** TAKSIM This Taksim Square landmark is a multi-purpose arts and cultural center, its main concert hall seating 1,300 plus a second concert hall, chamber theater, and cinema. Home of the state ballet, theater and opera companies, its events are posted outside near the box office, and tickets are cheap. Closed for refurbishment in 2008, it is due to reopen early 2009. *Taksim Meydani. Box office ☎ 0212 251 1023. www.idobale.com. Tickets approx 10–25 YTL. Metro/bus: Taksim. Map p 129.*

★★ **Cemal Reşit Rey Konser Salonu** HARBIYE A large theatre that is home to its own symphony orchestra, with a regular and varied program including classical, jazz, and world music, plus occasional traveling ballet and modern dance companies. Closed during summer. *Darülbedayi Cad, Harbiye. ☎ 0212 232 9830. www.crrks.org. Map p 129.*

★★ **Cemil Topuzlu Açikhava Tiyatrosu** HARBIYE This fantastic open-air theater is loved in summer, when it hosts performances as diverse as Balkan genius Goran Bregovic, best-known for his films scores, and jazz pianist Herbie Hancock or the St Petersburg Ballet. Most concerts are mid-July to early August. *Harbiye. www.biletix.com. Box office ☎ 0212 296 2404. Metro: Osmanbey. Map p 129.*

★ **French Cultural Centre** TAKSIM Located inside the gorgeous grounds of the French consulate, this small theater is a venue for Istanbul's theater and film festivals (see *Savvy*

Try and experience a concert at Haghia Eirene.

Traveler p 160). Look on the noticeboard outside for events. Istiklal Cad. ☎ 0212 393 8111. ***www.consul-france-istanbul.org***. ***Bus/Metro: Taksim. Map p 129.***

★★ **garajistanbul** GALATASARAY A new venue for contemporary performing arts, this space was created in the basement of a car park, not the likeliest venue for such a vibrant arts group. Launched by a group of local artists in early 2007, it has quickly made a name for itself, hosting performances from visiting avant garde dance and theater troupes, and producing works by in-house writers through their production company GarajPro. ***11A Kaymakam Reşat Bey Sok, off Yeni Çarşi Cad.*** ☎ ***0212 244 4499. www.garajistanbul.com. Tickets approx 10-20 YTL. Metro/bus: Taksim. Map p 129.***

★★★ **Haghia Eirene** SULTANAHMET The famous Byzantine church in the grounds of Topkapi Palace (see p 14) is rarely open—in fact your only chance is for an orchestral concert during June's Istanbul Music Festival. These will usually be the opening and closing nights, but take any opportunity to go, even just to appreciate the venue, which means booking well in advance. ***Topkapi Sarayi. www.iksv.org.***

Catch the sema ceremony of the Whirling Dervishes.

★★★ **Whirling Dervish Ceremony Galatasaray Mevlevihanesi** were hosting twice-monthly *sema* ceremonies by the Dervishes, but since it was closed for refurbishment (due to open early 2009), the performances took place most nights at Sirkeci station, on the railway platform. While this certainly makes *sema* accessible to visitors, with many outlets selling tickets, the most authentic experience is at a dervish lodge. The staff at **Les Arts Turcs,** a cultural organization with tours,

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Teaching them young at Inönü stadium with Beşiktaş supporters.

courses and information, organize low-key groups to visit the **Museum for the Study and Preservation of Tasavvuf (sufi) Music** on Monday nights from 9pm to experience the very spiritual ceremony, with the white-robed dervishes spinning, slowly, to attain spiritual enlightenment. It is a somber ceremony, which can last for several hours. It's advisable to go in a group, rather than alone, as this venue does not always welcome visitors. Dress respectfully (women should wear headscarves); no photographs allowed. Highly recommended. *Les Arts Turcs, 3/F 37 Incili Çavuş Sok. ☎ 0212 527 6859. www.lesartsturcs.com. Tram: Sultanahmet. Map p 130.*

Sport

Football Clubs

★★★ **Beşiktaş FC** GUMUŞSUYU The most accessible ground, a 10-minute downhill walk from Taksim Square, with a stunning view of the Bosphorus and Dolmabahçe Palace (see p 20) if the match gets too boring. Beşiktaş's last league victory was 2003, but have yet to make inroads into European trophies. You will find a healthy number of women and families in the crowd. *Inönü Stadium. ☎ 0212 310 1000. www.bjk.com.tr. Tickets from 30 YTL. Bus/metro: Taksim. Then walk. Map p 129.*

★ **Fenerbahçe F.C.** KADIKÖY Over on the Asian side in the spectacular stadium, one of Europe's finest, the Canaries are Turkey's most successful club, pipped to the post for the league in 2007–2008 by Galatasaray. Their kit shops are modestly called Feneriums. *Şükrü Saraçoğlu Stadium, Kiziltoprak. ☎ 0216 449 5667. www.fenerbahce.*

Istanbul 2010

Even as early as 2008, the city was breaking into cultural party mood as it prepares for **Istanbul 2010 – European Capital of Culture**, awarded to three European cities every year. Even its preparation and publicity work has been entertaining, with open-air concerts, street parties, and music and drama workshops—plus extensive restoration of mosques and monuments, and areas like Tarlibaşi (see *Modern Istanbul* bullet ⑤) getting a facelift. Before your visit, check out www.istanbul2010.org for listings of all events throughout 2009–2010, and get ready for open-air opera, street-theater and free concerts—plus a whole load of visitors.

What's On?

Listings of theater, dance, movies, concerts and sporting events can be found in the monthly English edition of ***Time Out Istanbul*** (www.timeout.com.tr/english). The English daily newspaper ***Turkish Daily News*** also has basic listings. Buy advance tickets for concerts, plays or sports events at **www.biletix.com—**also at the **Biletix** outlet at Istiklal Kitabevi, 55A Istiklal Cad. Their website has good day-to-day listings of what's on. Most cultural festivals (see p 160) are organized by the excellent **Istanbul Kültür Sanat Vakfi** (Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts); check www.iksv.org for dates and listings. Look out for flyers appearing on the walls of Istiklal Caddesi advertising concerts. The **movie halls**, especially around Istiklal Caddesi, often show recent Hollywood releases. Check they are subtitled into Turkish, rather than dubbed ('*Orijinal dilde mı?*'). Local English-language press will have the complete listings.

org. Tickets from 35 YTL. Ferry: Kadiköy, then walk. Map p 130.

★ **Galatasaray F.C.** MECIDEYKÖY Turkey's most famous (and arguably most supported) team, 'Cim Bom' have won the domestic league four times since 2000, plus the UEFA Cup in 2000 over Arsenal. The infamous Ali Sami Yen stadium (remember the banner 'Welcome to the Hell?') will soon be discarded for a much-needed, larger new ground, from late 2009. *Ali Sami Yen Stadium, Mecidiyekoy. ☎ 0212 273 2850. www.galatasaray.org. Tickets from 30 YTL. Metro: Mecidiyeköy. Map p 130.*

Motor Racing

★ **Istanbul Park** TUZLA On the Formula 1 circuit since 2005, this new 5.3km race track has 14 bends (including the famous Turn Eight) and mammoth capacity of 130,000. Dates of the F1 are subject to change —in 2009 it will be in August. Bear in the mind that all hotels bump their prices up over the Formula 1 weekend and are booked up months in advance. *Göçbeyli Köyü Yolu, Istanbul Park Circuit,* *☎ 0216 677 1010. www.istanbulparkcircuit.com. Ticket hotline ☎ 0216 556 9800. Map p 130.*

Golf

★ **Istanbul Golf Club** LEVENT One of the oldest clubs in Europe, going strong for over a century, this is the closest golf club to the city, north of the centre. Non-members are welcome any time at the 11-hole

Go for a strike at Bab Bowling.

Football—a National Obsession

Between late August to early May, it's hard to avoid the football (soccer) season, especially as Turkey's top league, the Super Lig's top three teams are from Istanbul; Beşiktaş, Fenerbahçe and Galatasaray. If you're a fan, I recommend going to a match—although given the intense passion and rivalry of supporters it's best to avoid a local derby. If possible, experience the wonderful Inönü Stadium to see Beşiktaş—and I'm not even trying to disguise my allegiance here: They were my team of choice when living in Istanbul in 1998 and I cheered them on at home games. Many women and families attend matches, certainly more than in England, especially in my favorite Yeni Açik section of the stadium—which also has the best view of the Bosphorus and glimpses of Dolmabahçe Palace's clock tower.

course (book ahead), with driving range, putting and chipping greens, although it gets busy at weekends; booking recommended. *Green fees 85 YTL Mon–Fri; 135 YTL Sat and Sun; 45 YTL club hire. Eski Oto Sanayi Sitesi Karşisi, Harp Akademileri içi, Büyükdere Cad. ☎ 0212 324 0609. www.igk.org.tr. Metro: 4. Levent. Map p 130.*

★ **Kemer Golf & Country Club** GÖKTÜRK Further out of the city, about 16 km northeast, this upmarket club has an 18-hole course (par 73) and driving range, plus chipping and putting green. *Green fees 150 YTL Mon–Fri; 200 YTL Sat and Sun; 52 YTL club hire. KG&CC Kampusu. ☎ 0212 239 8720. www.kg-cc.com. Map p 130.*

Bowling

★★ **kids** **Bab Bowling Café** BEYOĞLU Visitors of all ages love this six-lane 10-pin bowling alley complete with bar, snack food, glitter ball and disco music. Pool tables and football on the big screen make this a really sporty night out. *10am–midnight. 24 Yeşilcam Sok. ☎ 0212 251 1595. www.babbowling.com.tr. Bus/metro: Taksim. Map p 129.*

Horseracing

★★ **kids** **Veliefendi** BAKIRKÖY The historic racecourse, headquarters of the Turkish Jockey Club, started night races for the first time in August 2008, making for a buzzing atmosphere. Although Atatürk promoted this noble sport, most people are more interested in the betting than any particular equine affinity! The rules at betting counters are pretty easy to understand. Races run three times a week (usually Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday) but at time of writing days and times of their 2009 season were not confirmed. International jockeys and horses participate in the most lucrative race meeting of the year, the Topkapi Trophy in September. Şans (which means luck) Lokanta is a beer-and-chips type of place, with Byerley Türk a better restaurant with local food. Check their website or the ***Turkish Daily News*** for race schedules. *Entry 2-10 YTL. Türkiye Jokey Kulübü, Veliefendi Hipodromu, Bakirkoy. ☎ 0212 444 0855. www.tjk.org.Tram to Zeytinburnu, then minibus or taxi. Map p 130.* ●

9 The Best **Lodging**

Lodging **Best Bets**

Best **Location for Grand Bazaar**
★★★ Hotel Niles $ *19 Dibekli Cami Sok (p 144)*

Best **Secret Garden**
★★★ Empress Zoe $$$ *4 Akbiyik Cad (p 143)*

Best **Waterfront Terrace for Breakfast**
★★ Radisson SAS $$$$ *46 Çirağan Cad (p 145)*

Best **Outdoor Swimming Pool**
★★ Swissotel the Bosphorus $$$$$ *2 Bayildim Cad (p 147)*

Best **Use for an Old Distillery**
★★★ Sumahan on the Water $$$$ *51 Kuleli Cad (p 146)*

Most **Affordable Jacuzzi**
★★ Tan Hotel $$ *20 Doktor Eminpaşa Sok (p 147)*

Best for **Waterfront Opulence**
★★ A'jia $$$$$ *27 Çubuklu Cad (p 141)*

Best **Sultanahmet Cheapie**
★★ Peninsula $ *6 Adliye Sok (p 145)*

Best **Ultra Chic Lobby**
★★★ W Hotel $$$$$ *22 Süleyman Seba Cad (p 148)*

Best **Circular Bed**
★★★ Eklektik Guesthouse $$ *4 Kadribey Çikmasi (p 142)*

Best **Value for Families**
★★ Galata Residence $$ *2 Felek Sok (p 143)*

Best **View of Blue Mosque**
★★ Mavi Ev $$$ *14 Dalbasti Sok (p 144)*

Best for **Hip Shoppers**
★ The Sofa Hotel $$$$ *123 Teşvikiye Cad (p 146)*

Best **Beyoğlu Value**
★★ Pera Tulip Hotel $$ *103 Meşrutiyet Cad (p 145)*

Best **Guest Relations Staff**
★★★ Sirkeci Konak Hotel $$$ *5 Taya Hatun Sok (p 146)*

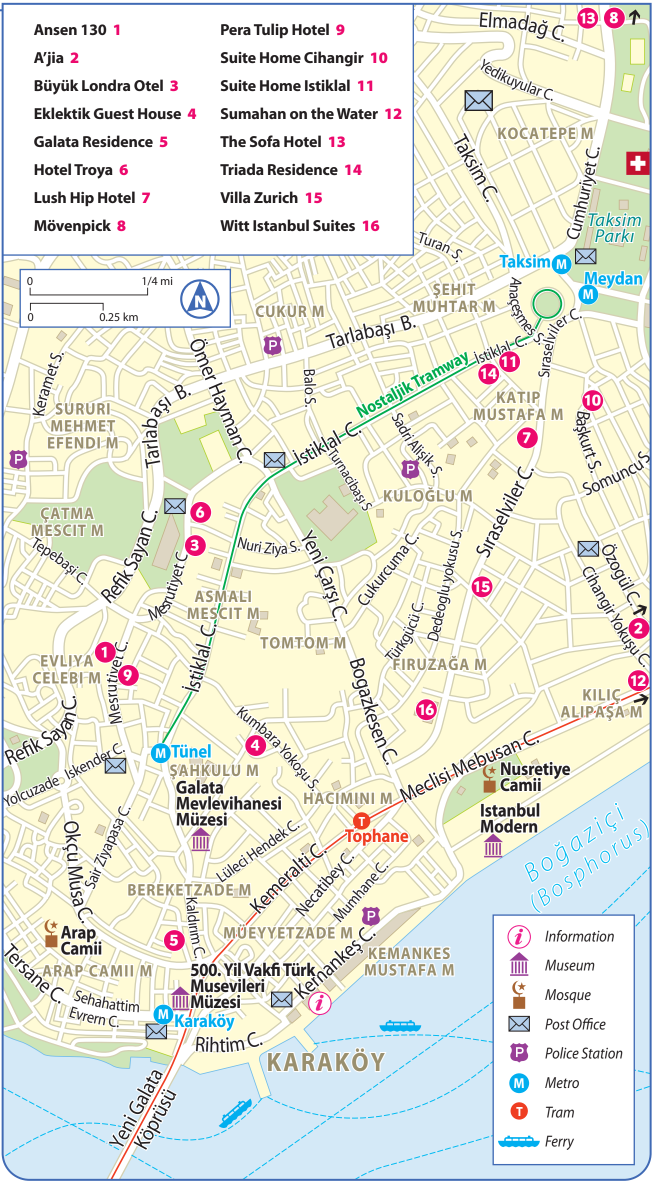
Best for **the Business District**
★ Mövenpick $$$$$ *4 Buyükdere Cad (p 145)*

Most **Unusual Exterior**
★★★ Four Seasons Hotel $$$$$ *1 Tevkifhane Sok (p 143)*

Businesslike elegance at Mövenpick Hotel.

Old City Lodging

Ansen 130	**1**	**Pera Tulip Hotel**	**9**
A'jia	**2**	**Suite Home Cihangir**	**10**
Büyük Londra Otel	**3**	**Suite Home Istiklal**	**11**
Eklektik Guest House	**4**	**Sumahan on the Water**	**12**
Galata Residence	**5**	**The Sofa Hotel**	**13**
Hotel Troya	**6**	**Triada Residence**	**14**
Lush Hip Hotel	**7**	**Villa Zurich**	**15**
Mövenpick	**8**	**Witt Istanbul Suites**	**16**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Taksim
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ŞEHIT MUHTAR M
CUKUR M
Tarlabaşı B.
Anaçeşmesi S.
Sıraselviler C.
İstiklal C.
Nostaljik Tramway
Balo S.
KATIP MUSTAFA M
Başkurt S.
Somuncu S.
Keramet S.
SURURI MEHMET EFENDI M
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Sadri Alişik S.
Turnacibaşı S.
KULOĞLU M
Sıraselviler C.
ÇATMA MESCIT M
Tepebaşı C.
Refik Sayan C.
Meşrutiyet C.
Nuri Ziya S.
Yeni Çarşı C.
Çukurcuma C.
Dedeoglu yokusu S.
Özoğül C.
Cihangir Yokuşu C.
ASMALI MESCIT M
TOMTOM M
Türkgücü C.
FIRUZAĞA M
EVLIYA CELEBI M
Meşrutiyet C.
İstiklal C.
Boğazkesen C.
KILIÇ ALIPAŞA M
Refik Sayan C.
Kumbara Yokoşu S.
Yolcuzade Iskender C.
Tünel
ŞAHKULU M
Galata Mevlevihanesi Müzesi
HACIMINI M
Meclisi-Mebusan C.
Nusretiye Camii
Istanbul Modern
Okçu Musa C.
Sair Ziyapasa C.
Lüleci Hendek C.
Tophane
Boğaziçi (Bosphorus)
Kemeraltı C.
Necatibey C.
Mumhane C.
BEREKETZADE M
Kaldırım C.
MÜEYYETZADE M
Arap Camii
KEMANKES MUSTAFA M
ARAP CAMII M
Tersane C.
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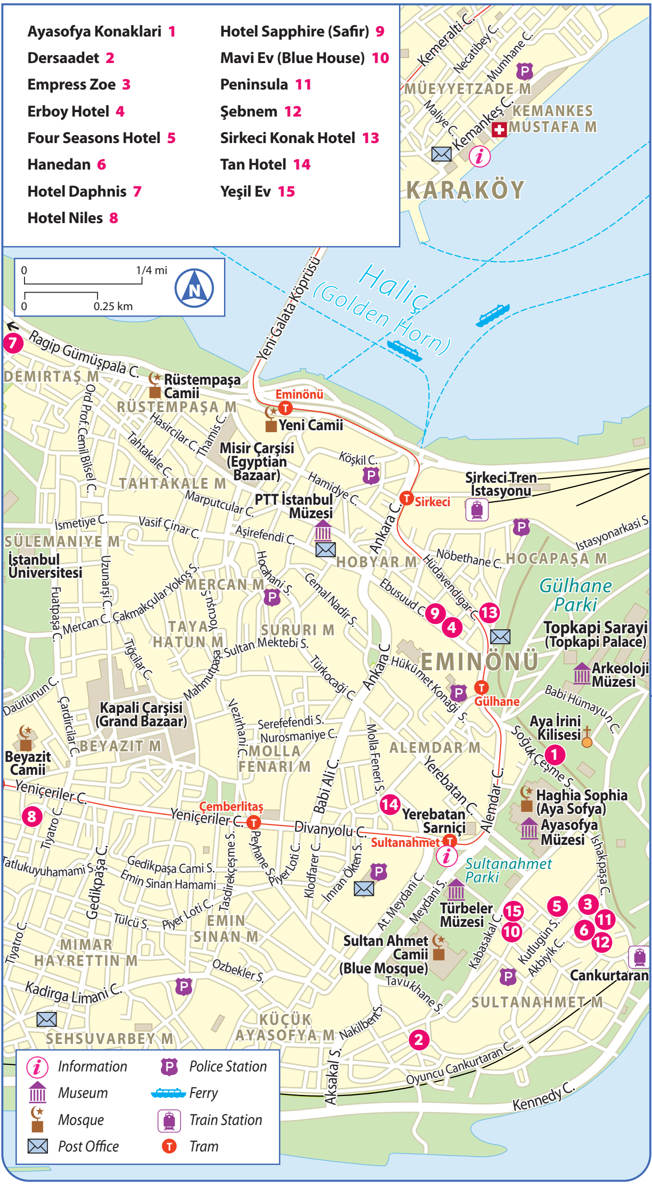
Kemankeş C.
Karaköy
Rıhtım C.
KARAKÖY
Yeni Galata Köprüsü
Information
Museum
Mosque
Post Office
Police Station
Metro
Tram
Ferry

Beyoğlu Lodging

Ayasofya Konaklari	**1**
Dersaadet	**2**
Empress Zoe	**3**
Erboy Hotel	**4**
Four Seasons Hotel	**5**
Hanedan	**6**
Hotel Daphnis	**7**
Hotel Niles	**8**
Hotel Sapphire (Safir)	**9**
Mavi Ev (Blue House)	**10**
Peninsula	**11**
Şebnem	**12**
Sirkeci Konak Hotel	**13**
Tan Hotel	**14**
Yeşil Ev	**15**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Yeni Galata Köprüsü
Ragip Gümüşpala C.
DEMIRTAŞ M
Rüstempaşa Camii
RÜSTEMPAŞA M
Eminönü
Yeni Camii
Ord Prof. Cemil Bilsel C.
Hasircilar C.
Thamis C.
Tahtakale C.
Misir Çarşisi (Egyptian Bazaar)
Köşkil C.
TAHTAKALE M
Hamidye C.
Marputcular C.
PTT İstanbul Müzesi
Sirkeci
Sirkeci Tren İstasyonu
İsmetiye C.
Vasif Çinar C.
Aşirefendi C.
Ankara C.
SÜLEMANIYE M
İstanbul Üniversitesi
HOBYAR M
Nöbethane C.
Hüdavendigar C.
HOCAPAŞA M
İstasyonarkasi S.
Uzunarşi C.
Fuatpaşa C.
Mercan C.
Çakmakçılar Yokuş S.
MERCAN M
Hocahani S.
Cemal Nadir S.
Ebusuud C.
Gülhane Parki
Topkapi Sarayi (Topkapi Palace)
TAYA HATUN M
Yocuşu S.
SURURI M
Sultan Mektebi S.
Tiğcilar C.
Mahmutpaşa
Türkocaği C.
Ankara C.
Hükümet Konaği S.
EMINÖNÜ
Gülhane
Arkeoloji Müzesi
Babi Hümayun C.
Daürlünun C.
Çarşirilar C.
Kapali Çarşisi (Grand Bazaar)
Vezirhani C.
Serefefendi S.
Nurosmaniye C.
Molla Feneri S.
ALEMDAR M
Aya İrini Kilisesi
Soğukçeşme S.
Beyazit Camii
BEYAZIT M
MOLLA FENARI M
Babi Ali C.
Yerebatan C.
Alemdar C.
Haghia Sophia (Aya Sofya)
Yeniçeriler C.
Tiyatro C.
Çemberlitaş
Yeniçeriler C.
Divanyolu C.
Yerebatan Sarniçi
Sultanahmet
Ayasofya Müzesi
Ishakpaşa C.
Tatlukuyuhamami S.
Gedikpaşa C.
Gedikpaşa Cami S.
Emin Sinan Hamami
Tasdirekçeşme S.
Peykane S.
Piyer Loti C.
Klodfarer C.
İmran Ökten S.
Sultanahmet Parki
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Meydani S.
Türbeler Müzesi
Kabasakal C.
Kutlugün S.
Akbiyik C.
Tülcü S.
Piyer Loti C.
EMIN SINAN M
Sultan Ahmet Camii (Blue Mosque)
Cankurtaran
Tiyatro C.
MIMAR HAYRETTIN M
Ozbekler S.
Tavukhane S.
SULTANAHMET M
Kadirga Limani C.
KÜÇÜK AYASOFYA M
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ŞEHSUVARBEY M
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Mosque
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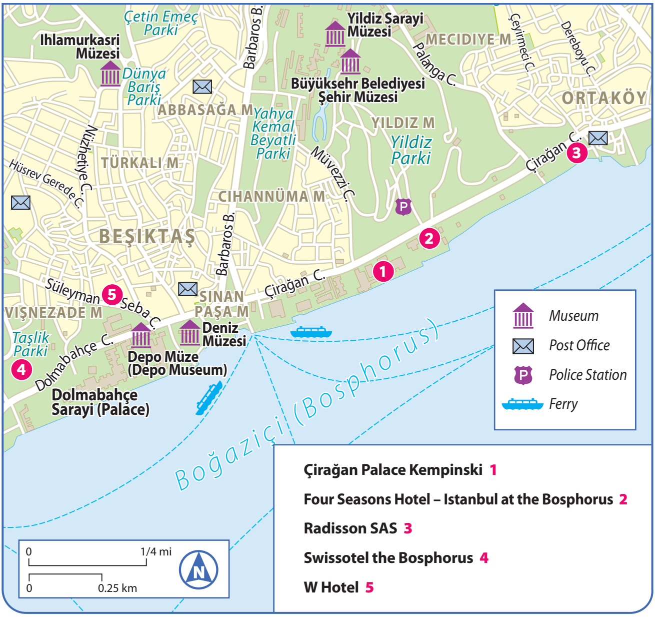
Police Station
Ferry
Train Station
Tram

Bosphorus Lodging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Barbaros B.
Yildiz Sarayi Müzesi
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Palanga C.
Büyükşehr Belediyesi Şehir Müzesi
ABBASAĞA M
Yahya Kemal Beyatli Parki
YILDIZ M
Yildiz Parki
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Hüsrev Gerede C.
TÜRKALI M
Müvezzi C.
Çirağan C.
CIHANNÜMA M
BEŞIKTAŞ
Barbaros B.
Çirağan C.
Süleyman Seba C.
VIŞNEZADE M
SINAN PAŞA M
Taşlik Parki
Deniz Müzesi
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Çirağan Palace Kempinski 1
Four Seasons Hotel – Istanbul at the Bosphorus 2
Radisson SAS 3
Swissotel the Bosphorus 4
W Hotel 5

Istanbul Lodging **A to Z**

★★ **kids** **Ansen 130** TEPEBAŞI
Built in a century-old building in a great neighborhood, chic Zen rooms with kitchenette, sofa and writing desk make Ansen great value. Rooms are spacious, each with huge plasma TV, Wi-Fi, and power shower, all in contemporary, minimalist style. A good central choice for business travelers. Breakfast is not available, but plenty of cafes nearby. *70 Meşrutiyet Cad. ☎ 0212 245 8808. www.ansensuites.com. 10 units. Doubles €200–500 exc b/fast. AE, MC, V. All buses from Taksim. Map p 139.*

★★ **A'jia** KANLICA Far from sightseeing and nightlife, this is one for a secluded romantic break. Perched on the Asian side of the Bosphorus, all rooms have stunning sea views (some with private balcony) and an uncluttered feel with wooden floors, white furnishings and contemporary art. The terrace is, of course, to die for; good modern European dining. *Ahmet Rasim Pasha Mansion, 27 Çubuklu Cad. ☎ 0216 413 9300. www.ajiahotel.com. 16 units. Doubles €280–700. AE, MC, V. Tram: Beyazit. Map p 139.*

★ **Ayasofya Konaklari** SULTANAHMET Looking decades old, these nine wooden houses are a recent clever rebuilding project. The cobbled pedestrian street (see p 73) behind Haghia Sophia houses 64 rooms with tasteful Ottoman-style décor, including small Turkish bath in

Ayasofya Konaklari's recreated tradition.

the Pasha Suite. Most rooms are without TV. The street-side rooms have lovely views, and breakfast is served on one of three terraces. *Soğukçeşme Sokaği. ☎ 0212 513 3660. www.ayasofyakonaklari.com. 64 units. Doubles €150–200. MC, V. Tram: Sultanahmet. Map p 140.*

★ **Büyük Londra Otel** TEPEBAŞI The bar and entrance ooze faded decadence, especially the chandeliers and Ottoman nick-nacks. Guest rooms aren't as glamorous—ensure you get a renovated room—but they are ideal for Beyoğlu's nightlife and shopping. Over 100 years old, its kudos heightened when featured in two recent Turkish films. *53 Meşrutiyet Cad. ☎ 0212 245 0670. www.londrahotel.net. 54 units. Doubles €50–150. AE, MC, V. Bus: Tepebaşi. Map p 139.*

★★ **Çirağan Palace Kempinski** BEŞIKTAŞ Splash out in this former Ottoman palace—worth paying extra for a Bosphorus-view suite in the old wing Top notch (and top dollar), outstanding features include the outdoor 'infinity' pool, heated in winter, and the excellent Tuğra restaurant. Lottery winners could try the lavish multi-roomed Grand Sultan Suite (€35,000). *32 Çirağan Cad. ☎ 0212 326 4646. www.kempinski-istanbul.com. 314 units. Doubles from 360€. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: Beşiktaş to Ortaköy. Map p 141.*

★★ **kids** **Dersaadet** SULTANAHMET This family-run restored Ottoman house in a quiet street has well-kept rooms and great service. Some have bathtub and Bosphorus views, all have flat-screen TVs and wooden floors; the penthouse suite boasts 180° views and Jacuzzi. Breakfast is served on the flower-filled roof terrace. *5 Kapiagasi Sok, off Kucukayasofya Cad. ☎ 0212 458 0760. www.hoteldersaadet.com. 17 units. Doubles €115–190. AE, MC, V. Tram: Sultanahment. Map p 140.*

★★ **Eklektik Guest House** GALATA Hidden away down a Galata backstreet, this charming gay-friendly guesthouse has seven rooms in a converted Ottoman house, each with unique style. Choose from contemporary clean lines in the Black Room, marble shower in the Sultan's Room, or circular bed in the Red Room—pure camp. Guests enjoy breakfast around a communal table. *4 Kadribey Çikmasi, off Serdar-I Ekrem Cad. ☎ 0212 243 7446. www.eklektikgalata.com. Doubles €95–115. AE, MC, V. Tunnel: Tünel. Map p 139.*

Seaview terrace at Dersaadet Hotel.

★★★ **Empress Zoe** SULTANAHMET Stylishly converted from three adjacent townhouses, the hotel has a vast selection of rooms and prices, from standard double to duplex with two bedrooms and kitchen. Cleverly using the original wood and stone, history is retained but all mod cons are included. The tiny garden is a peaceful hideaway for breakfast or evening drinks next to an old hamam. *4 Akbiyik Cad.* ☎ *0212 518 2504. www.emzoe.com. 25 units. Doubles €110–150 AE, MC, V. Tram: Sultanahmet. Map p 140.*

★ **Erboy Hotel** SIRKECI Great value and hospitality at this centrally located three-star hotel. Simple, bright rooms have TV and AC, with a large lobby and free Wi-Fi in the communal areas, plus a meeting room. Wonderful Bosphorus views from the roof terrace. *32 Ebussuud Cad.* ☎ *0212 513 3750. www.erboyhotel.com. 85 units. Doubles €64. AE, MC, V. Tram: Sirkeci. Map p 140.*

★★★ **Four Seasons Hotel** SULTANAHMET An Istanbul longstanding favorite this is Sultanahmet's most luxurious hotel, with world-class service. Converted from the neoclassic Sultanahmet Prison in 1986 with distinctive ochre watchtower (and prisoners' graffiti in the basement), its high-ceilinged rooms are spacious and luxurious; home to Seasons restaurant (see p 114). *1 Tevkifhane Sok.* ☎ *0212 638 8200. www.fourseasons.com/istanbul. 65 units. Doubles €350–500. AE, DC, MC, V. Tram: Sultanahmet. Map p 140.*

The Four Seasons—fine use for an old prison.

★★ **Four Seasons Hotel – Istanbul at the Bosphorus** BEŞIKTAŞ Making a big impact since opening in May 2008, Istanbul's second Four Seasons is in a refurbished 19th-century Ottoman palace with a contemporary feel. Mahogany furnishings and hand-painted motifs on the ceilings, modern facilities include huge plasma TVs, DVD players, luxury spa—including indoor and outdoor pools—business center and restaurants. *28 Çirağan Cad.* ☎ *0212 381 4000. www.fourseasons.com/bosphorus. 166 units. Doubles €350–500. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: Beşiktaş. Map p 141.*

★★ kids **Galata Residence** GALATA Refurbished from the Camondo family house (see p 37), these apartments are good value, even the small ones with simple kitchens. Large apartments have two bedrooms plus living room, a good option for families, although it's off a steep road. Most of the original wooden furnishings remain, with TV and in-room internet enhancing the comfort. Watch out for pricey items in the refrigerators! *2 Felek Sok, off Midilli Sok.* ☎ *0212 292 4841. www.galataresidence.com. 21 units. Doubles €75–120. AE, MC, V. Tunnel: Tünel. p 139.*

★★ **Hanedan** SULTANAHMET A friendly little guesthouse in a quiet street, no-frills rooms mean dark, wooden floorboards with simple furniture, with fantastic terrace views of the Marmara Sea for your buffet breakfast. For a little extra, some large rooms have a sea view. Free Wi-Fi throughout, but no TV in rooms. (20% discount for online booking.) *3 Adliye Sok, off Akbiyik Cad.* ☎ *0212 516 4869. www.hanedanhotel.com. 10 units. Doubles €60–80. AE, MC, V. Tram: Sultanahmet. Map p 140.*

★ **Hotel Daphnis** FENER The four adjoining traditional wooden houses, painstakingly restored by its new owner in 1999, have dark-wood floors, plain furnishings and original pale-blue frescos. Some rooms have quaint balconies, although bathrooms are tiny. Fener's only hotel gets you away from the crowds. *26 Sadrazam Ali Paşa Cad.* ☎ *0212 531 4858. www.hoteldaphnis.com.16 units. Doubles €90–120. AE, MC, V. Bus or boat: Fener. Map p 140.*

★★★ **kids** **Hotel Niles** BEYAZIT Tucked away near the Grand Bazaar (see p 96), this gem of a hotel has small and simple rooms and remarkably helpful staff. Great value, especially with the buffet breakfast on the roof terrace, and there's also a 24-hour café-bar. The spacious and brand-new suites are ideal for families. *19 Dibekli Cami Sok, off Ordu Cad.* ☎ *0212 517 3239. www.hotelniles.com. 29 units. Doubles €70–80. AE, MC, V. Tram: Beyazit. Map p 140.*

★★ **Hotel Sapphire (Safir)** SIRKECI Fantastic value in a convenient part of town, away from Sultanahmet's carpet shops but near enough the sights. Simple, light rooms have ornate touches, with flat-screen TV, minibar and small baths. There are also family-friendly large triple rooms, a large ornate lobby, friendly and efficient staff, and free airport transfer with a two-night minimum stay. *14 Ibnikemal Cad.* ☎ *0212 520 5686. www.hotelsapphire.com. 55 units. Doubles €80. MC, V. Tram: Sirkeci. Map p 140.*

★ **Hotel Troya** TEPEBAŞI Basic yet good value rooms with en suites at this handy location, close to Istiklal Caddesi but relatively quiet. Rooms and reception have had a recent makeover, so it's in good—albeit plain—condition. *45 Meşrutiyet Cad.* ☎ *0212 251 8206. www.hoteltroya.com. 84 units. Double €50–65. AE, MC, V. Bus: Tepebaşi. Map p 139.*

★★ **Lush Hip Hotel** CIHANGIR Opened in 2006, the chic décor in this converted apartment block puts it firmly in the HIP hotel category. Close to Taksim Square (rooms overlooking the street are noisy), rooms come in varying sizes and are uncluttered and light, with natural tones and prints of Beyoğlu scenes adorning the walls. Bathrooms have powerful showers. Breakfast is in the elegant 24-hour brasserie, with Wi-Fi throughout and a new spa. *12 Siraselviler Cad.* ☎ *0212 243 9595. www.lushhiphotel.com. 35 units. Doubles €130–350. AE, MC, V. Bus: Taksim. Map p 139.*

★★ **kids** **Mavi Ev (Blue House)** SULTANAHMET This restored Ottoman house opposite the Blue Mosque (see p 15; bring earplugs for the dawn call to prayer) is charming, with small, plain rooms and tiny bathrooms, with traditional

Hotel Niles in busy Beyazit.

Funky artwork adorns the walls at Lush Hip Hotel.

touches such as brass double beds and wooden floorboards. Ask for a room with views, at no extra cost. *14 Dalbasti Sok. ☎ 0212 638 9010. www.bluehouse.com.tr. 27 units. Doubles €160–220. AE, MC, V. Tram: Sultanahment. Map p 140.*

★★ **Mövenpick** LEVENT A good chain choice for business guests in the banking district. Contemporary rooms have extra-large desks, Wi-Fi and the Skyline Club Lounge for all executive-floor guests. The hotel also houses business and banqueting rooms, sauna, pool, and the wonderful AzzuR restaurant. *4 Buyükdere Cad. ☎ 0212 319 2929. www.moevenpick-hotels.com. 249 units. Doubles €190–350 (excluding breakfast). AE, DC, MC, V. Metro: 4. Levent. Map p 139.*

★★ **kids** **Peninsula** SULTANAHMET Converted from an old townhouse on a traffic-free street, basic rooms have all the basics with Wi-Fi and AC, but no TV. Standard rooms are small, with two interconnecting rooms suitable for families and a good-value larger double. Friendly staff, with a superb buffet breakfast on the terrace, including homemade yoghurt and cake. *6 Adliye Sok, Akbiyik Cad. ☎ 0212 458 6850. www.hotelpeninsula.com. 12 units. Doubles €40–55. MC, V. Tram: Sultanahmet. Map p 140.*

★★ **kids** **Pera Tulip Hotel** TEPEBAŞI Opened in May 2008, this compact friendly hotel enjoys a great Beyoğlu location. Contemporary rooms have lovely touches like bold patterned cushions and strong colors. With a small business center, meeting rooms, *hamam* and indoor pool, all rooms have Wi-Fi, kettle (very important!) and minibar, offering great value. Larger executive rooms are worth the extra. *103 Meşrutiyet Cad. ☎ 0212 243 8500. www.peratulip.com. 84 units. Doubles €100–200. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: All buses from Taksim. Map p 139.*

★★ **kids** **Radisson SAS** ORTAKÖY The Ortaköy waterfront location is a real highlight, best enjoyed over breakfast on the terrace. Add good business facilities, meeting rooms, and Wi-Fi throughout, plus some rooms have a Bosphorus view. At weekends, ask for a room away from the nearby nightclub if you want to sleep. Mornings and weekends see traffic congestion. *46 Çirağan Cad. ☎ 0212 310 1500. www.radissonsas.com. 120 units. Doubles €180–360 including breakfast. AE, MC, V. Bus/boat: Ortaköy. Map p 141.*

★ kids **Şebnem** SULTANAHMET As guesthouses in this area go, it's at the pricey end, but the dark wood, white walled rooms with a tiny garden are worth the extra, perfect for a romantic trip. Breakfast is served on the flower-filled terrace. Free Wi-Fi (although no TV) and use of laptops, and obliging staff. ***1 Adliye Sok, off Akbiyik Cad.*** *☎ 0212 517 6623. www.sebnemhotel.net. 15 units. Doubles: €90–100. AE, MC, V. Tram: Sultanahmet. Map p 140.*

★★★ kids **Sirkeci Konak Hotel** SIRKECI This luxury boutique hotel has been popular since opening in 2007, with fantastic guest relations staff. Tastefully furnished rooms have dark-wood floors, writing desk, and flat-screen TV, some with balcony, with private Jacuzzi in the triple deluxe suite. Additional touches include free afternoon tea in the bar, plus Turkish cookery lessons. Guests have free use of small pool, *hamam* and the fitness center. ***5 Taya Hatun Sok.*** *☎ 0212 528 4344. www.sirkecikonak.com. 52 units. Doubles €170–220. AE, MC, V. Tram: Sirkeci. Map p 140.*

★★ **Suite Home Cihangir** CIHANGIR Tucked away in this residential neighborhood near Taksim, suites are in different styles and sizes, and all very contemporary. The big bonus is the huge sofas and kitchens; the larger suites have separate living rooms, while the penthouse suites offer balconies. Long-stay business travelers love the small meeting rooms and spa. ***12 Başkurt Sok.*** *☎ 0212 243 3101. www.istanbulsuite.com. 14 units. Doubles €80–250. AE, MC, V. Metro/bus: Taksim. Map p 139.*

★★★ **Suite Home Istiklal** TAKSIM Opened in 2008, this is prime location in the hub of Beyoğlu. Great-value rooms in neutral colors splashed with contemporary art have extras ranging from large living/dining areas and small kitchenette, to comfy sofas. All have large TV and Wi-Fi, desks and fridges, some with balconies. Ask for a back room if you don't want street noise. ***45 Istiklal Cad.*** *☎ 0212 245 0772. www.istanbulsuite.com. 19 units. Doubles €100–160. AE, MC, V. Bus/Metro: Taksim. Map p 139.*

Şebnem Hotel's bijoux garden.

★★ **Sumahan on the Water** ÇENGELOKÖY A village on the Asian side of the Bosphorus is perfect for a romantic hideaway, in a boutique hotel renovated from an Ottoman distillery. Rooms are effortlessly elegant and minimalist in light woods, each with huge windows and unbeatable views. Split-level suites have their own terrace, many rooms have Turkish baths. ***51 Kuleli Cad.*** *☎ 0216 422 8000. www.sumahan.com. 18 units. Doubles €190–320. AE, MC, V. Boat/bus: Çengelköy. Map p 139.*

★★ **Swissotel the Bosphorus** MAÇKA The gleaming—and huge—palatial entrance sets the tone of this Leading Hotels of the World member. Spread over two huge wings, most rooms have Bosphorus views and luxurious touches like chaise longue and huge writing desk. The huge Amrita Spa and Wellness Centre is a big attraction, Istanbul's largest with

16 different treatment rooms, outdoor pool and sun terrace for a really decadent stay (see *Restaurants* p 110). ***2 Bayildim Cad. ☎ 0212 326 1100. www.istanbul.swissotel.com. 600 units. Doubles €250–500. AE, MC, DC, V. Metro or bus to Taksim, then taxi. Map p 141.***

★★★ **kids** **Tan Hotel** SULTANAHMET A cut above other hotels of similar price, this new hotel in a quiet side-street has large modern rooms, all with fridge, large sofa, and Jacuzzi. Grand suites (with fluffy bathrobes) have a sofa-bed and sleep three people. Flat-screen TV and large windows add to in-room comforts. Some higher floors have decent views; ask on booking. ***20 Doktor Eminpaşa Sok, Çatalçeşme Meydani. ☎ 0212 520 9130. www.tanhotel.com. 20 units. Doubles €105. AE, MC, V. Tram: Sultanahmet. Map p 140.***

★★ **The Sofa Hotel** NIŞANTAŞI Nestled in fashion land, the Sofa deserves its HIP label. Spacious rooms and tasteful décor are the epitome of contemporary chic, rooms come with DVD players and huge bathrooms with powerful shower. The Omar Suite has indoor *and* outdoor Jacuzzis. Huge meeting rooms, a wellness center, small pool, and fitness room caters for all needs—plus two contemporary art galleries and the Longtable restaurant-bar. ***123 Teşvikiye Cad, ☎ 0212 368 1818. www.thesofahotel.com. 82 units. Doubles 200€–800€. AE, DC, MC, V.Minibus: Nişantaşi. Map p 139.***

★★ **kids** **Triada Residence** TAKSIM Converted from a traditional Beyoğlu apartment building, what it lacks in décor it compensates with decent-sized bedrooms with small living rooms and kitchenette, with basic cooker and fridge. Close to shopping, restaurants and nightlife, this is great value for money. ***4 Meşelik Sok, off Istiklal Cad. ☎ 0212 251 0101. www.triada.com.tr. 11 units. Suites €70. AE, MC, V. Bus, or tram/funicular: Taksim. Map p 139.***

★★ **Villa Zurich** CIHANGIR This friendly and popular hotel in an charming residential neighborhood has newly renovated rooms in tasteful pale blues and creams, many with bath and Jacuzzi, with Wi-Fi throughout. Front-facing rooms have small balconies. Doga Balik restaurant (see p 109) is on the roof terrace. ***36 Akarsu Yokuşu Cad. ☎ 0212 293 0604. www.hotelvillazurich.com. 41. units. Doubles €110–160. AE, MC, V. Bus/metro: Taksim. Map p 139.***

Where to Stay?

Hotels cluster around Sultanahmet and Beyoğlu, poles apart in ambience and amenities, so your choice depends on priorities. If you prefer views of the Blue Mosque, vicinity to historical monuments and Ottoman houses on cobbled streets, Sultanahmet is for you. Just bring earplugs for neighboring mosques' dawn call-to-prayer, be prepared for carpet touts and never-ending souvenir shops. If good restaurants and bars are important, head to Beyoğlu, where Istiklal Caddesi buzzes all night. It's easier to travel to Sultanahmet during the day than to travel back there after a night out in Beyoğlu.

How Much?

Prices listed are the rack rate for high season (roughly mid-March to late October), including breakfast and tax, often 10–20% less for winter months. Top hotels usually have good deals on their websites or through booking agencies, and can be quieter in August, with fewer business visitors. You can also try phoning the hotel directly to ask for any special rates, especially out of season. Hotels book up quickly and prices shoot up during Şeker Bayram, the festival after Ramazan (see p 160) and major events—especially the Istanbul Grand Prix (see p 161).

★★★ **W Hotel** AKARETLER Mirrored tables and silver drapes—and that's just the welcome area. Opened in May 2008 and converted from Dolmabahçe Palace kitchens, this sexy hotel has a wide range of rooms with a contemporary twist on classic Ottoman style, such as Marmara marble sinks, 32 flat-screen TV, Wi-Fi, Ipod docking stations, and spa. Houses the fabulous Spice Market restaurant. *22 Süleyman Seba Cad.* ☎ *0212 381 2121. www.whotels.com/istanbul. 134 units. Doubles €280–600. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: Beşiktaş. Map p. 141.*

W Hotel.

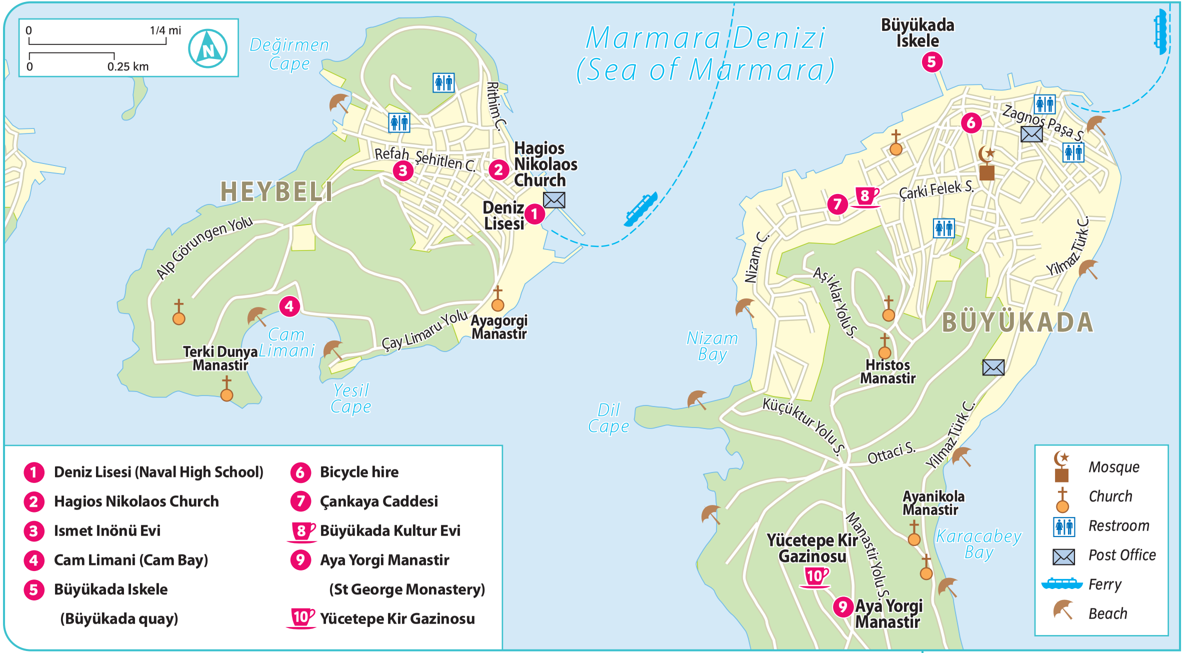
★★ **Witt Istanbul Suites** BEŞIKTAŞ Opened in 2008, this exquisitely designed boutique hotel has modish suites with a real 'luxury apartment' feel. Each 60m^2 suite, designed by hip architects Autobahn, has a kitchenette and huge bathroom, with the Witt's elegant floral motif on walls and furnishings. Sweeping views from the top-floor's fitness studio deter any inclination to laziness. *26 Defterdar Yokuşu.* ☎ *0212 393 7900. www.wittistanbul.com. 15 units. Doubles €170–200. AE, DC, MC, V. Bus: Beşiktaş. Map p 139.*

★ **Yeşil Ev** SULTANAHMET Rebuilt from an existing Ottoman wooden house in 1977, this popular guesthouse has brass beds and antique furniture, although recent price hikes have meant its value for money is debatable. The standard double room is tiny and bathroom minuscule. Still, its green wooden exterior and garden are charming, and service is good. *5 Kabasakal Cad.* ☎ *0212 517 6786. www.istanbulyesilev.com. 19 units. Doubles €250–300. AE, MC, V. Tram: Sultanahmet. Map p 140.* ●

10

The Best Day Trips & Excursions

Princes' Islands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Değirmen Cape
Marmara Denizi (Sea of Marmara)
Büyükada Iskele
Rithim C.
Hagios Nikolaos Church
Refah Şehitlen C.
HEYBELI
Deniz Lisesi
Alp Görungen Yolu
Ayagorgi Manastir
Çay Limaru Yolu
Cam Limani
Terki Dunya Manastir
Yesil Cape
Dil Cape
Nizam Bay
Nizam C.
Aşiklar Yolu S.
Çarki Felek S.
Zagnos Paşa S.
Yilmaz Türk C.
BÜYÜKADA
Hristos Manastir
Küçüktur Yolu S.
Ottaci S.
Yilmaz Türk C.
Ayanikola Manastir
Karacabey Bay
Yücetepe Kir Gazinosu
Manastir Yolu S.
Aya Yorgi Manastir
Mosque
Church
Restroom
Post Office
Ferry
Beach

1 Deniz Lisesi (Naval High School)
2 Hagios Nikolaos Church
3 Ismet Inönü Evi
4 Cam Limani (Cam Bay)
5 Büyükada Iskele (Büyükada quay)
6 Bicycle hire
7 Çankaya Caddesi
8 Büyükada Kultur Evi
9 Aya Yorgi Manastir (St George Monastery)
10 Yücetepe Kir Gazinosu

This group of islands off Istanbul's southeast coast has enjoyed a colorful history: Summer houses for Istanbul's elite, haven for Jewish, Greek, and Armenian minorities and exile for 'White Russians' in the 1940s. These days, locals flock here in summer for day trips of cycling, swimming, and car-free exploring—a blissful novelty after congested Istanbul. It's impossible to cover all nine islands in a day, so here's an energetic day divided between the two largest, Heybeliada and Büyükada. On each, you can walk, cycle, or hire a phaeton (horse and trap), depending on mood and energy levels. Stick to weekdays if you want to avoid the crowds. **START: Heybeliada ferry pier.**

① ★ **Deniz Lisesi (Naval High School).** You'd be hard pushed to miss the huge waterfront naval school as you leave the ferry pier on Heybeliada (literally 'Saddlebag Island' due to its shape). Originally the Naval War Academy set up in 1852, it's been a high school since 1985, and the white façade makes a striking sight. It is closed to the public and uniformed cadets on patrol will prevent you taking photographs close up. ***Heybeliada Iskele.***

② ★ **Hagios Nikolaos Church.** Dominating the village's main square, the church was dedicated to St Nikolaos, the patron saint of mariners, and celebrated 150 years in 2007. Like most Greek orthodox churches it's unlikely to be open outside Sunday services, which are attended by around 30 locals, although it's worth a try. Inside, it's adorned with gold, chandeliers and frescoes, with the tomb of Patriarch Samuel I behind the altar. Opposite the church on the square are several **bicycle hire** shops, and also cafés. If you choose to continue your journey in the relative decadence of a **phaeton**, head back to the ferry pier for the rank. ***Belediye Meydani, Ayyildiz Caddesi. Service: Sun 9–11am.***

Dramatic approach to Princes' Islands.

③ ★★ **Ismet Inönü Evi.** A 15-minute walk along Refah !ehitler Caddesi brings you to a wooden mansion, and an historical one to boot. Now a house museum, this was part-time residence of Ismet Inönü, president of the new Republic of Turkey for 12 years from 1938. He originally rented the house with his family during a bout of poor health in 1924, but bought it in 1934 (with furniture given by Atatürk) and he lived here until his death in 1973. The house is perfectly preserved, from his book-filled office—with the original ink-well on the desk—to his daughter's cartoon stickers on her wardrobe. I love the photographs on the walls; not just the formal portraits but holiday snaps of the family in bathing suits enjoying Heybeliada's beaches. 🕒*.45 min.* ***59 Refah***

Jumping in from Cam Limani pier.

Şehitler Caddesi. ☎ *0216 351 8449. Admission free. Closed Nov–Mar; open Tues–Sun 9am–5pm.*

④ ★ **Cam Limani (Cam Bay).** Depending on how far you want to walk, cycle, or ride, continue along **Refah Şehitleri Caddesi,** following it around until you descend to the small bay of Çam Limani, a beautiful walk with woods, fields and the odd glimpse of the sea, taking almost an hour. If in doubt, follow the road which the horse and carriages take. Although not picturesque golden sands, the bay is a good spot to rest on sun loungers or swim off the wooden pier. From here, go back along **Gemici Kaynagi Sokak** until you pass **Deniz Lisesi** ① on your right, and the **ferry pier**, from where you sail to **Büyükada**.

⑤ ★ **Büyükada Iskele (Büyükada Quay).** After a 15-minute journey, ferries arrive at **Büyükada's** (Big Island) striking quay. Hang back to admire the tiling on the upper front façade of the terminal. Built in 1914, this replaced the wooden quay built in 1899, and was used as the island's first movie hall between 1950-51. Its octagonal hall still stands, from where you can try to get a map of the island from the (rarely open) tourist office.

⑥ **kids** ★ **Bicycle hire.** If you prefer to explore the island on two wheels, head to the small collection of bicycle hire shops on **Çinar Caddesi,** with kids' bikes and tandems also available. *Marmara Bisiklet, 10 Çinar Caddesi.* ☎ *0216 382 5896. Approx 2 YTL/hr; 7 YTL/day.*

⑦ ★ **Çankaya Caddesi.** If walking up to Aya Yorgi (St George's) Monastery, a long but rewarding hour's walk, I recommend taking the longer but more picturesque route along Çankaya Caddesi. Lined with grandiose wooden mansions, its previous residents included Ottoman diplomats, painters, princes, and lawyers, and allegedly Leon Trotsky. My favorite is **#44**, an ageing white mansion, now headquarters of the **Kaymakam** (district governor). The façade needs sprucing up, but it's a

Noble exterior of the Kaymakam's HQ.

Practical Matters

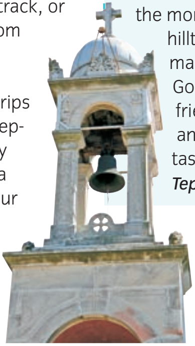
Ferries and sea-buses leave from Kabataş (see p 163), with more leaving during the summer (16 June–16 September). Fast ferries take around 35 mins to reach Heybeliada, then a further 15 minutes to Büyükada. Check at the ferry pier for times (☎ 0216 444 4436; www.ido.com.tr/en). Slow ferries take about 90 mins from Kabataş to Büyükada. Each ferry has seats on the small deck at front and back, or along the sides of the boat, and simple refreshments are served on board. Buy a jeton (token) before boarding, or use your akbil (see *Getting Around* p 164); single journeys cost about 1.50–2.50 YTL.

highlight of the street's grandeur and, as a public building, you can approach the main entrance for a closer look.

8 ★ **Büyükada Kultur Evi.** With a 50-year-old phaeton in the garden, this mansion has been converted into a cultural center, housing exhibitions and summer concerts. Build up your strength with tea and snacks on the terrace for the big walk ahead. ***21 Çankaya Cad. ☎ 0216 382 8620. $$.***

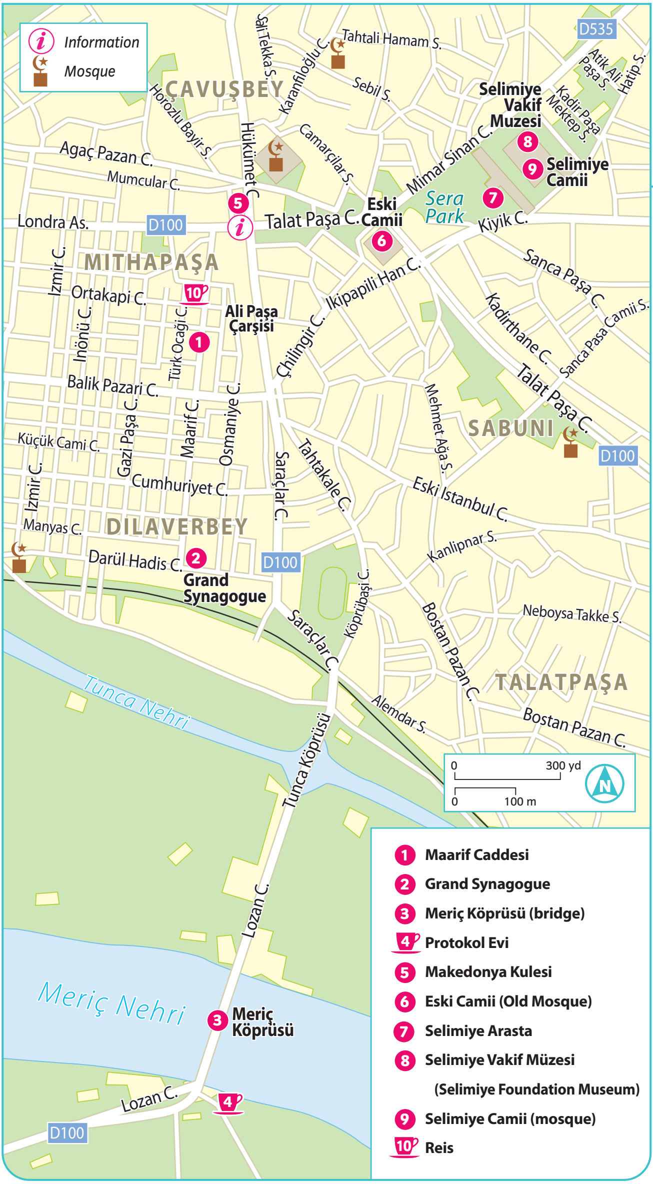
⑨ ★★ **Aya Yorgi Manastir (St George Monastery).** You may opt for a phaeton for this long uphill route, although the walk is fantastic. Steel yourself for the final, steepest mile on a rough cobbled track, or hire a donkey at the bottom (bargaining essential). On your way up you'll pass bushes on the left with strips of fabric attached, each representing a prayer, usually from women wishing for a child. The bell tower is your first glimpse, before you pass through the tiny courtyard (where women should don headcovering and cover legs). The wishes theme continues inside the sixth-century monastery's silent, remote interior. On the right, you'll see a large glass container into which people place their written prayers. If you're surprised to see so many locals making wishes, bear in mind that people of all religions believed (and still do) that the highly revered St George performed miracles. Thousands of worshippers make the trip for the auspicious days of 23 April and 24 September, when all wishes are thought to come true. It's your decision if you want to brave the crowds to try it out! 🕒 *1 hr.* ***Yüce Tepe. Admission free. Open daily 9.30am-6pm.***

10 ★★ **Yücetepe Kir Gazinosu.** This simple restaurant adjacent to the monastery is perfect for its hilltop terrace with panoramas of other Prince's Islands. Good-value *mezes*, kebabs, fried eggplant with yoghurt, and beers make this a fantastic refueling spot. ***Yüce Tepe. ☎ 0216 382 1333. $$.***



Worth climbing the hill for—Aya Yorgi Manastir.

Edirne


Information
Mosque
ÇAVUŞBEY
MITHAPAŞA
DILAVERBEY
SABUNI
TALATPAŞA
Sali Tekka S.
Tahtali Hamam S.
Karanfiloğlu C.
Sebil S.
Horozlu Bayir S.
Hükümet C.
Camarçilar S.
Agaç Pazan C.
Mumcular C.
Londra As.
D100
D535
Talat Paşa C.
Eski Camii
Sera Park
Mimar Sinan C.
Selimiye Vakif Muzesi
Selimiye Camii
Kadir Paşa Mektep S.
Atik Ali Paşa S.
Hatip S.
Kiyik C.
Sanca Paşa C.
Sanca Paşa Camii S.
Kadirthane C.
Ikipapili Han C.
Chilingir C.
Ali Paşa Çarşisi
Izmir C.
Ortakapi C.
Inönü C.
Türk Ocaği C.
Balik Pazari C.
Gazi Paşa C.
Maarif C.
Osmaniye C.
Küçük Cami C.
Cumhuriyet C.
Manyas C.
Darül Hadis C.
Grand Synagogue
Saraçlar C.
Tahtakale C.
Mehmet Ağa S.
Eski Istanbul C.
Kanlipnar S.
Köprübaşi C.
Bostan Pazan C.
Neboysa Takke S.
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1. Maarif Caddesi
2. Grand Synagogue
3. Meriç Köprüsü (bridge)
4. Protokol Evi
5. Makedonya Kulesi
6. Eski Camii (Old Mosque)
7. Selimiye Arasta
8. Selimiye Vakif Müzesi (Selimiye Foundation Museum)
9. Selimiye Camii (mosque)
10. Reis

Once the capital of the Ottoman Empire, Edirne sits strategically a few miles from the Greek and Bulgarian borders. Today, it's best known for Mimar Sinan's Selimiye Mosque and the Kirkpinar oil wrestling festival. This is one of my favorite Turkish cities; smaller and more relaxed than Istanbul, with most places of interest clustered around the centre. Although boasting a host of museums and mosques, after the plethora in Istanbul I've selected my favorite ones—plus some unusual spots. **START:** **Hürriyet Meydani.**

① **kids** ★ **Maarif Caddesi.** A main street running south from Hurriyet Meydani, this has a charming collection of traditional Türkevi, Turkish wooden houses, for which the city is renowned. Head further down to **Kirkpinar Ev** on the right, a restored house-museum exhibiting the history of Edirne's traditional oil wrestling (see Slippery Sport, below). Opening hours are erratic, which is a shame, as there are some lovely exhibits of this important traditional sporting event, held just outside the city center. If closed, at least the gardens give you a taster, with noble statues of past *başpehlivans* (head wrestlers) and *ağa* (wealthy benefactors) of this ancient sport.

② ★ **Grand Synagogue.** At the bottom of Maarif Caddesi are the remains of the synagogue, which suffered further disrepair when the domed ceiling collapsed. (I heard recently that there are plans to restore it.) During Edirne's huge fire in 1905, 13 synagogues were destroyed and replaced by this one, but no Jewish community exists today. It's possible to peek through the gates at what remains of the interior, although if you turn the corner at the bottom of the street, you can see the main gate to visualize its former glory. 🕘 *10 min. Southern end of Maarif Caddesi.*

③ ★ **Meriç Köprüsü (bridge).** From the synagogue, it's approximately a 15-minute walk down Karaağaç Yolu to the picturesque bridge over the Maritza River. Completed in 1847, the 263-metre-long stone bridge with 12 pointed arches also has drainage ports in the pedestals to prevent flooding, which destroyed the previous wooden bridge. Pop into the tiny marble lodge around halfway along, with decorative landscape scenes painted on the ceiling. If you don't want to walk back the same way, pick up a minibus near Protokol Evi after your coffee break—it's about a 20-minute walk to **Makedonya Kulesi**.

Walk over the mid-19th-century Meriç Köprüsü.

Practical Matters

Fast, comfortable coaches run from Istanbul's otogar (bus station) to Edirne, the 250km (155 miles) taking 2.5 hours. Allow extra time for the *servis,* the free shuttle minibus service that collects passengers from various points in the city and takes them to the bus station; the ticket office will inform you where and when. Taksim, Beşiktaş and Aksaray have offices; buy your outbound ticket a day in advance to get a good seat. On reaching Edirne *otogar,* ask for a *dolmuş* (minibus) to Hurriyet Meydani or Selimiye Camii. A good option for a full-day trip would depart Istanbul on the 7am **Ulusoy** service, returning on **Volkan** at 9.30pm or later. Buy your return ticket when arriving at Edirne otogar unless it's high season. **Edirne Tourist Office**, 17 Hürriyet Meydani (☎ 0284 213 9208) has helpful staff, maps, and leaflets. As with all mosques, visitors should cover arms and legs; women must also cover their hair.

4 kids ★★ **Protokol Evi.** The café by the bridge is in a newly restored house owned by the local council. Take a table at the terrace's edge for a peaceful and perfect view of the river, perfect for coffee and breakfast, or soup and salads. *Kopru Basi, Lozan Caddesi.* ☎ *0284 2233 282. $.*

⑤ kids ★★★ **Makedonya Kulesi.** Also known as the Saat Kulesi (Clock Tower), one of Edirne's landmarks, built in 1894, is on an archaeological site excavated in 2003. You'll probably be the only one exploring this site, small enough to walk in comfort. The main external wall dates back to Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman times, containing the remains of a tenth-century Byzantine church and fresco, plus late-Roman pottery ovens. (Hopefully one of the official guides will be present to point these out.) For me the highlights, albeit grizzly, are the fragments of Ottoman human bones—including parts of a skull—embedded in the south wall, mainly covered by foliage, which marks the cemetery. The Roman wall used no cement and still has the rivets marking where iron bars were used to connect it. A fantastic discovery. 🕘 *45 min. Mumcular Sokak. Daily 8.30am–8pm; free.*

Look out for the bones at Makedonya Kulesi.

⑥ ★★ **Eski Camii (Old Mosque).** With room for 3,000 worshippers, Edirne's oldest Ottoman monument completed in 1414 under Mehmet I has striking interior dominated by the huge Arabic inscriptions of 'Allah' and 'Mohammed' on the walls. (Climb up to the balcony for the best view.) Built in a perfect square, each of the nine domes—in the style of the famous Ulu Camii (Grand Mosque) in the city of Bursa—is 13m in diameter. Look out for the small piece of stone from Mecca encased in glass, on the wall near the *minbar* (pulpit), and the marble gate on your way out. To the left of the mosque, near the cafés, is a **statue** of *pehlivans* (wrestlers) an Edirne emblem. 🕒 ***30 min. Corner of Talatpasa Asfalti & Londra Asfalti. Open daily from dawn till nightfall.***

⑦ ★ **Selimiye Arasta.** Like many shopping areas built around a mosque, this covered market was commissioned to bring in revenue for Selimiye Camii. These days it's not so much the produce (think baskets of fruit-shaped soap and fridge magnets) but the layout, with 73 arches, which take you back centuries. When you see piles of cheap shoes, remember that part of this market was the 'ready-made Shoe-Makers' Bazaar', as recorded by Evliya Çelebi (1611–1682), the famous Ottoman writer and traveler. In those days (perhaps before fridge magnets?) stall holders swore an oath under the prayer dome of the mosque that their transactions would be honest. I hope they're as honest today. ***Selimiye Camii complex. Daily 9am–nightfall; free.***

⑧ **kids** ★★ **Selimiye Vakif Müzesi (Selimiye Foundation Museum).** Opened in 2007, this was a lovely surprise on my last trip. The museum occupies the old *medrese* (school) adjacent to **Selimiye Camii (mosque)** built around a square garden and using individual classrooms for different themes. Most displays specialize in Ottoman crafts such as calligraphic arts and ornate brass candlesticks, and explain the importance of metallurgy in Turkish art. If you're a fan of inlaid wood, you'll love the 18th-century wooden Koran stands and tables inlaid with mother-of-pearl. If you walk around the museum anticlockwise, you end up at the Koran room, with realistic life-size models of a Koran class and ornate 15th-century wooden doors from Beyazit Camii (see Ch 3, p 84). Relax with tea in the central garden. 🕒 ***1 hr. Selimiye Kulliyesi, Sarul Kurra Medressi.*** ☎ ***0284 212 1133. Admission free. Open daily 8.30am–5.30pm.***

Sinan's masterpiece, Selimiye Camii.

⑨ ★★★ **Selimiye Camii (mosque).** Why not save the best till last? Wonder-architect Mimar Sinan did, completing the mosque aged 80 in 1575 and, in his own opinion, his finest creation, and symbolic of the Ottoman state. If entering through the main entrance, you'll pass the huge statue of the architect, indicating the reverence held for him in the city. The four

Slippery Sport

If you wondered what's with the statues of burly wrestlers, it's because Edirne hosts Turkey's annual Kirkpinar oil wrestling competition (late June-early July). With roots dating from the 14th century when Ottoman troops returned from conquest, modern-day wrestlers (pehlivans) compete in heavy leather breeches, their bodies doused in olive oil. The three-day tournament takes place a few miles outside the center at Kaleiçi, complete with traditional music, excitable crowds, and a spirit of genuine humility, tradition, and ceremony. The winner of each level (determined by weight) wins cash prizes, with the heavyweight (*baspehlivan*) also winning a gold belt. Kirkpinar Festival is popular so if you're staying overnight, book your hotel weeks ahead, and bus tickets in good time.

pencil-slim minarets are dazzling, even more so when lit up, each 71m high with three ornate balconies. In the middle of the spacious courtyard the 16-sided *şadirvan* (ablutions fountain, where men wash hands, face and feet before praying), gets busy at prayer time. Once inside, my eyes are always drawn to the 40m-high dome, the most impressive I've ever seen, with intricate painting making me wish I could climb higher to see it close up. Take a close look at the ornately carved marble *minbar* (pulpit) with tiled top, plus the use of gold, exquisite Iznik tiles and mother-of-pearl throughout. 🕒 ***1 hr. Mimar Sinan Caddesi. Admission free. Open daily sunrise-nightfall; no entry at prayer time.***

10 ★★ **Reis.** This new fish restaurant prepares simple fried fish with piles of salad in a spacious dining area, popular for lunch. It's a lovely place to dine before returning to Istanbul. ***Mithatpaşa Mahallesi, Maarif Caddesi.*** ☎ ***0284 212 0550. $$.*** ●

Erdine's iconic wrestlers caught in a grapple.

The
Savvy Traveler

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Before You Go

Government Tourist Offices

In the USA: 821 UN Plaza, New York, NY 10017 (☎ 212 687 2194); 2525 Massachusetts Ave, Washington DC 20008 (☎ 202 612 6800); 5055 Willshire Blvd Suite 850, Los Angeles CA 90036 (www.tourismturkey.org). **In the UK:** 4/F 29-30 St James's St, London SW1A 1HB. (☎ 020 7839 7778, www.gototurkey.co.uk).

The Best Times to Go

April to June and **September to October** are the best times to visit (highs of 16°–20°C), with the most comfortable temperatures and plenty of festivals and events going on. August is much quieter, with many top hotels offering discounts because of fewer business visitors, and when many Istanbullus head to the south coast for their holidays. Business and opening hours alter during **Ramadan** (the month-long fasting from dawn to dusk). Its date moves approximately 11 days earlier every year, as the Islamic lunar calendar is used. Ramadan for 2009 begins August 22; and on August 11 in 2010 (estimated). During this month avoid eating, drinking, or smoking in public (tactless for those fasting!). Some small restaurants (especially in conservative areas) close during the day; all places are generally busy for *iftar* (breaking the fast meal) especially around Sultanahmet Park, a favorite for picnicking locals. Outside the fashionable nightlife areas of Beyoğlu, Ortakoy, etc, some bars close for the month. During the two biggest religious festivals, **Şeker Bayram** (three-day festival marking the end of Ramadan) and **Kurban Bayram** (Feast of Sacrifice, 10 weeks later) many attractions and shops close for three days. Hotels and flights fill up in advance and are more expensive, and generally many people travel to, and from, Istanbul.

Festivals & Special Events

Most art and cultural festivals are organized by the excellent **Istanbul Kültür Sanat Vakfi** (Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts; www.iksv.org; ☎ 0212 334 0700). **Pozitif (☎ 0212 334 0100; www.pozitif.info)** organizes cutting-edge music events in the city. Most events can be booked at Biletix (various outlets include Istiklal Kitabevi, 79–81 Istiklal Cad; www.biletix.com.tr.)

SPRING. The cultural year kicks off with **Istanbul International Film Festival** for two weeks in April. Old, new, Turkish and international films with English subtitles (even the US films!) and annual awards honor the best Turkish films and directors, plus the lifetime award (awarded in 2008 to Claudia Cardinale). Screened in six cinemas, mainly in Beyoğlu, tickets sell out fast (see *Useful Websites*, below). From mid May the three-week long **International Istanbul Theatre Festival** is a mix of overseas theater and dance companies, and new productions from around Turkey. About 70 performances take place at venues ranging from Haghia Eirene and the Atatürk Cultural Centre's main hall, to small stages at museums and consulates. May sees music-lovers flock to the **Chill Out Festival** (www.chilloutfest.com) organized by Lounge 102 FM at Kemer Golf & Country Club, a 12-hour festival ranging from jazz and funk to soul and hip-hop. Big names in 2008 included Morcheeba and Sebastian Tellier.

SUMMER. June's two-day music festival **Efes Pilsen One Love** (www.efespilsenonelove.com) has put on artists as varied as Gogol Bordello, Black Eyed Peas and the Beastie Boys at an outdoor venue (2008 at santralistanbul). The **International Istanbul Music Festival** (three weeks in June; www.iksv.org/muzik) showcases over 500 artists, including over 20 performances with symphony orchestras and baroque music ensembles. Best are those performed at historic venues like Topkapi Palace, and in the Archaeology Museum's gardens. Although the month can change (since its inception in 2005 it's been either in May or August), the **Istanbul Grand Prix** at the gleaming Istanbul Park's circuit attracts worldwide petrol-heads to the city's Asian outskirts. Friday and Saturday see practice and qualifying laps; the competition is on Sunday. (Istanbul Park, Göçbeyli Köyü Yolu, ☎ 0216 677 1039; www.istanbulparkcircuit.com). **International Istanbul Jazz Festival** (two weeks in June; www.iksv.org/caz) is a prestigious event; Herbie Hancock, Lennie Kravitz (they use the term 'jazz' loosely), and Al Jarreau have all graced the stages of jazz clubs and parks. **Rock'n Coke** (www.rockncoke.com) took a break in 2008 but will be back; Turkey's largest open-air music festival attracts nearly 50,000 with major acts like Franz Ferdinand, Iggy Pop and The Cure, in Hezarfen Airfield, outside the city.

FALL. Istanbul goes arty in the fall, with the **International Istanbul Biennal** (www.iksv.org/bienal) lasting three months from September (next one 2009). This is Turkey's biggest contemporary art show; run by international guest curators with a theme, the city exhibits works of about 100 international artists in various venues. October's **Contemporary Istanbul** (☎ 0212 244 7175; www.contemporaryistanbul.com) incorporates painting, sculpture and installation from local and international galleries. Going strong since 1993, **Akbank Jazz Festival** (www.akbanksanat.com) prefers fusion events at hip venues like Babylon, with Brazilian or Middle Eastern beats, and plenty of Turkish musicians. Everything stops—including pedestrians and traffic—when the siren sounds on November 10 at 9.05am to mark the **Anniversary of Atatürk's death**.

WINTER. **Efes Pilsen Blues Festival** (www.pozitif.info) warms up cold evenings, with international blues artists performing with local artists, part of a tour through cities in Turkey and Russia.

The Weather

Spring and fall are usually dry and sunny; summers (July–Aug) can be blisteringly hot and humid, not much fun on crowded transport but good to enjoy Bosphorus-front evenings in the cafés, restaurants, and nightclubs. Some up-market clubs and restaurants close in the winter months (early Oct–mid May) or change to indoor venues. December to February can be cold and wet, and it often snows, bringing chaos to the city.

Useful Websites

- **www.mymerhaba.com**: Covers all Turkey with practical info, although the What's On section isn't very up to date.
- **www.turkishdailynews.com.tr**: Online version of the English-language daily newspaper, a good way to keep track of the volatile political situation before visiting.
- **www.todayszaman.com**: Online version of Today's Zaman, the English-language daily paper started in 2007, which has better listings for Istanbul than TDN (above).
- **www.istanbulcityguide.com**: Good profile of the city, and info on music events in the upcoming week.
- **www.biletix.com**: Online booking agent for tickets for concerts, sporting events and shows.

AVERAGE TEMPERATURE AND RAINFALL IN ISTANBUL

	°C (LOW)	°C (HIGH)	°F (LOW)	°F (HIGH)	RAINFALL (CM)
Jan	3	8	37	46	10.9
Feb	2	9	36	48	9.2
Mar	3	11	37	52	7.2
Apr	7	16	45	61	4.6
May	9	22	48	54	3.8
Jun	16	25	61	77	3.4
Jul	18	28	64	82	3.4
Aug	19	29	66	84	3.0
Sep	16	24	61	75	5.8
Oct	13	20	55	68	8.1
Nov	9	15	48	59	10.3
Dec	5	11	41	52	11.9

- **www.kultur.gov.tr**: Official website of the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism.
- **www.iksv.org**: Organizers of most of Istanbul's culture and music festivals.
- **www.tourismturkey.org**: Official Turkish tourism site in the US.
- **www.gototurkey.co.uk**: Official Turkish tourist site in UK.
- **www.pozitif-ist.com**: Listings of funky music events.
- **www.istanbul-ulasim.com.tr**: Official site for Istanbul's public transport, with route maps and ferry times.
- **www.iett.gov.tr**: Another part of the public transport site, with information on modes of transport. The route planner might actually work one day!
- **www.turkeytravelplanner.com**: Guide to the country written by US travel writer Tom Brosnahan.

Cellphones (Mobiles)

Most UK phones can send and receive calls/SMS, and most tri-band cell phones from the US will work—although roaming charges are expensive. The Turkish government blocked visitors buying local SIM cards in 2007 (if set up on unregistered phones). It's now easy to buy an **açik kartli** ('open' sim card) from any Turkcell office, with 100 kontor (units) for about 20 YTL, valid for 8 days, with instant access to the account. For longer stays, it is sensible to buy a cheap handset in Istanbul and set up a pay-as-you-go account. Your hotel may help with phone rental. The main Turkish networks are Turkcell (www.turkcell.com.tr), Türk Telekom (www.turktelekom.com.tr), and Avea (www.avea.com.tr).

Car Rental

Driving in Istanbul is *really* not advisable as traffic jams are a nightmare, public transport and taxis are relatively cheap—and it takes guts (foolhardiness?) to compete with local drivers! Major car-hire companies have counters at the airport terminals, plus offices located around Taksim, although it's cheaper to book online in advance. Prices are comparatively high to back home. Try **Avis** (www.avis.com), **Budget** (www.budget.com), **Hertz** (www.hertz.com), and **National** (www.nationalcar.com); prices can vary wildly. Drivers must be 21 or over. Check the website of **Turkish Touring and Automobile Club** (www.turing.org.tr) for information on driving licenses and permits.

Getting **There**

By Plane

Atatürk International Airport is the main international airport, a relatively new and specious building in Yeşilköy (☎ 0212 465 5555; www.ataturkairport.com). Major **airlines** flying into Istanbul from US and UK include Turkish Airlines, Delta Airlines and American Airlines. Other US airlines require changing in London or other major European cities. The airport is located 17 miles (28km) west of the city center.

The **Havaş** airport bus departs from outside the arrivals hall approximately every 30 mins between 4am and 1am, to the main office in Taksim Square, stopping in Aksaray (for Sultanahmet) and Tepebasi; the bus to the airport leaves the Taksim office on Cumhuriyet Caddesi on the hour (4am–7am) and every half hour (7.30am–midnight). Check the times on the board. Tickets cost 10 YTL (single), and the journey takes around 40 mins, depending on traffic.

Yellow **taxis** queue outside the arrivals hall; check the meter is switched on (see *Getting Around,* p 164). Fares are about 40 YTL to Taksim (40 mins) and 30 YTL to Sultanahmet (30 mins), 50% higher between midnight and 6am.

The cheapest option (great with no luggage!) is by **metro**, changing at Aksaray onto the tram (total 2.60 YTL), taking around 40 mins. The metro runs daily, approx 6am–midnight.

Flights from London to Istanbul with budget airlines Easyjet (www.easyjet.com) or Pegasus (www.flypgs.com), and most domestic airlines, land at **Sabiha Gökçen International Airport** (☎ 0216 585 5090; www.sgairport.com) in Pendik. Located 50km east of the city center, an irregular **Havaş** bus service (10 YTL) takes about one hour to reach Taksim from outside arrivals. The bus leaves the Taksim office every hour, on the hour. Public IETT buses are slower but more regular. Advice for early departures from this airport: little opens before 10am so don't bank on buying Duty Free or having breakfast!

By Train

Forget the Orient Express; most trains from Istanbul to other cities in Turkey and Europe are slow but cheap (www.tcdd.gov.tr). It takes about 8 hours to reach Sofia by bus, but 15 hours by overnight train (with a first-class sleeper, I think it's far better!). Daily trains run to Bucharest and Budapest, leaving from Sirkeci station, near Sultanahmet. Trains to Iran leave from Haydarpaşa station, near Kadiköy on the Asian side; trains to eastern Turkey are very slow, but express services also run several times daily to Ankara, with faster services planned.

By Bus

Most Turks travel long-distance by comfortable and fast private coaches. The main bus station (*otogar*) is in Esenler, but you can book tickets in offices located on Inönü Caddesi in Gümüşsuyu, Sultanahmet, or Beşiktaş, from where private shuttle buses (*servis*) take you to Esenler for your bus departure. If you arrive in Istanbul by bus, ask the driver for the *servis*, or take the metro to Aksaray and change to the tram for Sultanahmet or Kabataş/Taksim. As well as national routes, international services include Sofia (8 hrs) Thessaloniki (12 hrs), and many other European cities.

Reputable companies include **Varan** (19B Inönü Cad, www.varan.com.tr), **Ulusoy** (59 Inönü Cad,

☎ 444 1 888; www.ulusoy.com.tr) and **Kamil Koç** (29 Inönü Cad ☎ 444 0562).

By Car

All roads lead to Istanbul! The highways are fast, new and usually—unless you're driving into Istanbul on a Sunday evening—fairly traffic-free. Most highways operate a toll fee of a few lira. Gas (petrol) in Turkey is among the most expensive in the world. Added to that, Turkish roads are considered some of Europe's most dangerous; if driving, take care on long journeys, take plenty of breaks and watch your speed limit (120km/h) on highways.

If you bring your own car into Turkey, ensure you have an international driving license, car registrations documents, and international green card. (Check www.turing.org.tr for details.).

By Boat

As well as private cruise ships, weekly ferries sail to Odessa, (Ukraine) (www.ukrferry.com) and Turkey's south coastal resort Bodrum (0212 444 3369; www.denizline.com.tr). Fast ferries run by IDO (www.ido.com.tr) cross the Marmara Sea to Yalova, connecting by road to cities including Bursa and Iznik.

Getting **Around**

By Public Transport

Istanbul's public transport system, run by IETT (www.iett.gov.tr), is always improving—although what the city desperately needs is an underground/subway system. An **akbil (**pay-as-you-go electronic ticket, a bit like London's Oyster Card) is recommended; top up with cash (try 10 YTL at a time) then cancel out as you board bus, tram, local ferry or metro. With a small (returnable) deposit, buy a ticket at the white booths labeled 'akbil satiş noktasi' at transport hubs like Taskim Square and Eminönü. It's convenient and slightly cheaper than the standard 1.30 YTL single ticket, and there is a further discount (about 50%) for connecting services taken within 90 minutes. If you don't have an *akbil*, stock up on tickets before every journey, or *jetons* (tokens) at the ferry, tram and metro stations.

By Tram

The tram (www.istanbul-ulasim.com.tr) is one of the best ways to get around the Old City, with stops including Eminönü (Spice Market), Sirkeci (train station), Sultanahmet, and Beyazit (Grand Bazaar). It crosses Galata Bridge and ends at Kabataş, from where the underground **funicular** goes up to Taksim, connecting with the **metro** (see below).

In contrast, the **Nostaljik Tramvey**, is a revival of Istanbul's historic tram system, now running from Taksim Square to Tünel. The one-mile journey down Istiklal Caddesi (8am-10pm) takes up to 15 minutes. Pay by *akbil* or 1YTL to the driver (they give change). This connects with the historic **Tünel;** one of the world's oldest underground routes, traveling 573m between Karaköy and Tünel main square (saving the steep uphill hike) between 7am-9pm (1YTL).

By Taxi

You'll find yellow metered taxis all over Istanbul. Daytime fares (look for 'gündüz' on the meter) start at 2YTL, and night fares between midnight and 6am ('gece') are 50%

extra. If a driver tries to fix a price in advance, or says the meter isn't working, don't take the ride (watch out for those around Sultanahmet) and ensure the meter is switched on as your journey starts. Most taxi drivers are decent, although some will try to take the 'scenic' route. Tipping is not required, although rounding up a couple of lira is appreciated. Avoid handing over large bills (20YTL or 50YTL) as drivers don't always keep much change—and ensure canny ones don't cheat you by substituting your 50 YTL for a 5 YTL.

By Metro

At the time of writing, the metro travels only from Taksim to 4th Levent, passing through Şişli (extensions due to complete in 2009). On a different line, the light metro runs from Aksaray to Otogar (main bus station) and Atatürk Havalimani (airport).

By Bus

Most buses are green single- deckers, run by IETT, with hubs including Taksim Square, Eminönü, Beyazit and Kabataş. A ticket is needed before boarding (bought from nearby kiosks) to give the driver on entry, or use your akbil. Most services run between 6.30am–11.30pm. Private blue buses (Özel Halk otobusu) run roughly the same routes; pay cash on boarding. Single journeys are fixed fares of 1.30 YTL.

By Dolmus and Minibus

The bright-yellow *dolmuş* (meaning 'full') operate like shared taxis on fixed routes, departing when full. Start and end points are fixed, but you can get off at any point, shouting *'inecek var'* to the driver to stop. You can flag the bus down anywhere on the route. Useful routes include Inönü Caddesi (off Taksim Square) to Nişantaşi, and Taksim to Aksaray, which runs until about 2am. Fares are higher than buses, and payable to the driver. Blue-and-white minibuses operate less frequently, with longer distances from fixed points; look out for the big 'D' sign by bus stops. A useful service is from Beşiktaş to Sariyer.

On Foot

Istanbul is best seen on foot, especially around the steep cobbled streets of the Old City and Beyoğlu. Istanbul drivers have scant regard for zebra crossings and often make turns without looking for pedestrians. If you're trying to cross a busy multi-lane road, do as the locals do and walk slowly but confidently across the road, putting your hand up to stop the traffic. Either that or wait for a local!

Fast **Facts**

ACCOMMODATION Istanbul is geared to tourists, ranging from guesthouses and Ottoman-style traditional houses to high-end hotel chains. The number of suite hotels (almost self-contained apartments) and contemporary boutique hotels has shot up. Prices in mid-range hotels have shot up, with rooms now on a par with many European cities. Istanbul isn't the bargain it once was! For long stays, get good deals on apartments and suites (see *Best Lodging* p 137). For short-term rental try www.istanbulholidayapartments.com (toll-free from US and Canada ☎ 1-800-753-2877 or +90 212 251 8530). Longer-term rental is available at www.istanbulrentals.com (☎ 0212 638 7606). Don't arrange hotels on arrival at the airport, nor from touts in the arrivals hall, as you can get ripped off.

ATMS/EXCHANGE Maestro, Cirrus, MasterCard and Visa cards are accepted at all **ATM**s, apart from a few only dealing with Turkish banks. Major banks may deal with American Express. **Döviz** (exchange bureaus) are dotted around Istiklal Caddesi, Divanyolu in Sultanahmet and the Grand Bazaar, and don't charge commission. Count the notes in front of the cashier to prevent 'errors'. Banks charge commission to change money, often a bureaucratic process. Travelers' cheques, although rare these days, can be changed at banks, with commission.

BANKS Banks open Mon–Fri 9am–5pm; some close 12.30–1.30pm.

BUSINESS HOURS Most stores open daily 10am–7pm, although many especially around Istiklal Caddesi close about 10pm and some small, independent shops close on Sundays. Most galleries and museums are closed on Mondays. Offices generally operate Monday–Friday 9am–5pm.

CLOTHING Avoid wearing shorts and singlets (men and women), especially for mosque visits. Women should carry a light wrap suitable to cover the hair and upper arms when necessary. On a night out in Beyoğlu, anything goes.

CONSULATES & EMBASSIES **US Consulate,** 2 Kaplicalar Mevkii, Istiniye, ☎ 0212 335 9000, http://istanbul.usconsulate.gov. **Canadian Consulate,** 189/5 Istiklal Cad, Beyoğlu, ☎ 0212 251 9838. http://turkey.gc.ca. **UK Consulate,** 34 Mesrutiyet Cad, Tepebaşi (☎ 0212 334 6400, http://ukinturkey.fco.gov.uk). **Irish Consulate,** 2/13 Merter Iş Merkezi, Ali Riza Gurcan Cad, Meter (☎ 0212 482 2434). **Australian Consulate,** 16/F Suzer Plaza, Elmadağ Askerocaği Cad, Şişli (☎ 0212 243 1333, www.dfat.gov.au). **New Zealand Consulate,** 48 Inönü Cad, Taksim (☎ 0212 244 0272), www.nzembassy.com.

CREDIT CARDS Withdraw cash in Turkish lira from all ATMs with credit cards, usually with a commission of 2–4%. All hotels and restaurants (except the most basic) accept credit cards, especially Visa and MasterCard, although fewer take American Express or Diners Club. A PIN is required when using credit cards at all outlets. To report **lost or stolen** cards from Turkey for US card-holders: American Express ☎ 001-715 343 7977; Visa ☎ 00-800-13-535-0900; MasterCard ☎ 00-800-13-887-0903. For UK card-holders: Visa ☎ 00-800-13-535-0900.

CUSTOMS It is forbidden to export genuine antiquities from Turkey. If you're buying a Turkish carpet, ask the dealer for a certificate of authenticity and get a receipt for all expensive items. Check www.gumruk.gov.tr for details. It is also forbidden to import any electronic items not for personal use.

DENTIST American Hospital and German Hospital (see *Hospitals* p 167) both have dental clinics.

DRUGS Don't even think of buying, taking, possessing, importing, or exporting any illegal drugs in Turkey. All drugs (including cannabis) are considered a serious offence, with high penalties and harsh police treatment.

ELECTRICITY The current is 220 AC, 50Hz, with standard European-style two-pin plugs. Adaptors can be bought locally, or buy a multi-purpose traveling adaptor before leaving home. US visitors may need a voltage converter for laptops.

EMERGENCIES For ambulance ☎ 112; Police ☎ 155; Fire ☎ 110; Traffic Police ☎ 154.

GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELERS Istanbul has gay bars (see p 125) and an increasingly liberal society, but homosexuality is illegal and generally disapproved of as going against conservative traditions. In mid-2008, local courts shut down the human-rights organization **Lambdaistanbul** (LGBT Solidarity Association), which organized Gay Pride, but at time of writing they were appealing for reinstatement (☎ 0212 245 7068; info line ☎ 0212 244 5762; lambda@lambdaistanbul.org). **Mor Kedi** (see *The Best Nightlife*, p 12) is a good meeting and information point for all gay and lesbian visitors.

HEALTH Drinking tap water is not advisable, so stick to bottled or boiled water. No inoculations are necessary for Istanbul. Avoid the mussels sold on street-carts, unless you have a cast-iron gut. If you have an upset stomach, stick to yoghurt and plain rice, and black tea with sugar. (See also *Pharmacies* and *Hospitals,* below and p 168).

HOLIDAYS Public holidays: January 1 (New Year's Day), April 23 (National Sovereignty and Children's Day), May 19 (Atatürk Commemoration and Youth Sports Day), Aug 30 (Victory Day), Oct 29 (Republic Day). In addition, first two days of Şeker Bayram (from September 20 in 2009; September 9 on 2010) and Kurban Bayram (from November 27, 2009; November 16, 2010).

HOSPITALS For advice, call the Hospital Information Hotline on ☎ 0212 444 0911. Some of the best private hospitals, with English-speaking staff, include: American Hospital, Guzelbahce Sok, Nisantasi (☎ 0212 444 3777, www.amerikanhastanesi.com.tr); German Hospital, 119 Siraselviler Cad, Taksim (☎ 0212 293 2150, www.almanhastanesi.com.tr); Jewish Hospital, 46 Hisarönü Cad, Balat (☎ 0212 635 9280). Payment is required at the time of treatment, with reimbursement through your insurance.

INSURANCE Check your existing insurance policies before buying travel insurance to cover trip cancellation, lost luggage, theft and medical expenses. Recommended US insurers include: **Access America** (☎ 1-800-284-8300; www.accessamerica.com); **Travel Assistance International** (☎ 800-821-2828; www.travelassistance.com) and for medical insurance **MEDEX Assistance** (☎ 1-800-732 5309; www.medexassist.com). UK citizens should shop around for the best deal, and remember that your **EHIC** (only for EU countries) is not valid. Bring ID and credit cards in case you need emergency medical treatment.

INTERNET Most hotel rooms now have Wi-Fi or cable internet. Simple internet cafés are dotted around Beyoğlu and Sultanahmet; look for the 'Internet' sign usually in a window on the 3rd or 4th floor of a building (about 2 YTL per hour), many with Skype facilties. Watch out for the different keyboard with Turkish characters (ç, ş, ı, etc.) when typing in web addresses and passwords.

LOST PROPERTY If your credit cards are stolen, call your card company immediately and file a report with the police (see *Credit Cards* p 166). If anything is lost or stolen, including passport, go to the Tourist Police (see *Police p* 168) who will help you fill out the necessary forms.

MAIL & POSTAGE Post offices—PTT—have prominent yellow-and-black signs, usually open Mon–Fri 9am–5pm, the main office at Sirkeci (Büyük Posthanesi Cad) is open daily. Other useful branches are Yeniçarşi Cad, Galatasaray and 2 Cumhuriyet Cad, Taksim. PTT branches are the only places to buy postage stamps.

MONEY The currency of Turkey is the Yeni Türk Lirasi (New Turkish Lira) or YTL. This replaced the old Lira (TL) in December 2005, knocking six zeros off the old notes (at that stage $1 = TL1,400,000). You might get some locals referring to 'iki milyon' out of habit. Ignore the milyon! Just to confuse matters further, from 2009 this currency may be known again simply as Turkish Lira (TL). Banknotes come in denominations of 5, 10, 20, 50 and 100 YTL. The YTL is divided into 100 yeni kuruş; coins come in 1, 5, 10, 25, 50 yeni kuruş and 1YTL. Minimize the chance of anyone trying to switch your high-denominational note for a smaller one (e.g. 50YTL for a 5YTL) by saying what it is when handing it over (especially to taxi drivers!).

NEWSPAPERS & MAGAZINES English-language newspapers include the long-running, rather lame *Turkish Daily News* (www.turkishdailynews.com.tr) and the smarter *Today's Zaman* (www.todayszaman.com) launched in 2007, with a larger circulation. The monthly magazine *Time Out Istanbul* has arts and entertainment listings, in larger bookshops. *The Guide* comes out every two months; a mini-directory of restaurants and shops.

PASSPORTS It is compulsory to carry ID in Turkey at all times, so for tourists this means passports. Police carry out spot checks and if you don't have ID, you may even be taken to the police station. As a precaution, photocopy your passport photo page and Turkish visa (se p 169) and leave it in your hotel. Go to your consulate (see p 166) if you lose your passport.

PHARMACIES There are pharmacies (*Eczane*) around the city, especially near the hospitals (see p 167). Local pharmacies take turns to provide a 24-hour service, *nobetci*, the address of which will be posted the windows. Pharmacists provide basic medical services and sell some medication without prescription. Those in Beyoğlu and Sultanahmet may speak some English.

POLICE For emergencies ☎ 155; Traffic police ☎ 154; Tourist police: Yerebatan Cad, opp. Yerebatan Sarniçi, ☎ 0212 527 4503.

SAFETY Violent crime is rare in Istanbul, but there is some minor, opportunistic crime. Watch bags at all times and be wary of pickpockets in crowds at the major sights and on public transport. You can get young solvent-sniffers asking for money on quiet Beyoğlu streets at night—walk briskly past. Avoid walking along unlit streets at night alone.

SMOKING The smoking ban hits Turkey 1 July 2009, when all bars, restaurants, shops, and taxis will be smoke-free, although many have already implemented a ban. Most hotels may permit smoking in guest rooms. Cigarettes are cheap, both local and foreign brands.

TAXES Turkish value-added (KDV) tax is 18% on most goods, 8% on food, included in the price. Foreign visitors can reclaim tax on all goods costing over 100 YTL at shops with the 'Tax Free Shopping' sign; ask for a full VAT receipt. This can be processed at the airport and a refund made in cash (Turkish lira) or to your credit card. For more information, contact Global Refund Turkey, 29 Ferah Sokak, Tesvikiye. ☎ 0212 232 1121. www.globalrefund.com.

TELEPHONES For national telephone enquiries ☎ 118; international operator ☎ 115. The local code for Istanbul is ☎ 0212 for the

European side, and [0216] for the Asian side. Include the local code for all calls made within Istanbul. To dial Istanbul from overseas: ☎ 001 (or 00 from UK) + 90 (Turkey code) + 212 (or 216 for the Asian side) + 7-digit local number. To dial overseas from Turkey, ☎ 00 followed by the national dialing code: 1 (US and Canada); 44 (UK); 61 (Australia); 64 (New Zealand). Public telephones only take cards; for local calls use a regular **telefon karti** which is inserted into the phone; for cheaper mobile and international calls buy a pre-paid card like **IPC** to scratch off the PIN and dial the access phone number. (At press time, an IPC card with 1000 units cost 10 YTL and could call a UK land line for about 1 hour.) Use these in your hotel room to minimize extortionate phone charges. Kiosks by public phones sell all types of cards, or buy from *bakkal* (grocery stores) for a bit extra.

TIME ZONE Turkey is 2 hours ahead of GMT, and 3 hours ahead between last weekend of March to last weekend of October.

TIPPING Top restaurants usually include service charge (*servis dahil* on your bill), especially at hotels, but if service is good, add another 5%, especially as many wait staff survive on tips. If not included, leave a tip of around 10% at bars that give table service. Leave small change in teahouses. It's not necessary to tip cab drivers, just round up to the nearest lira. Pay tour guides about 10% if they are good, caretakers at mosques a few lira.

TOILETS (RESTROOMS) Most toilets (*tuvalet*) in restaurants and bars are clean, and public lavatories usually have an attendant. Expect to pay about 50YKs, and take the toilet paper if offered! The most basic ones (in parks and mosques) are squat toilets, with a flush or a tap. A pack of wet wipes is handy in case there is no sink. Mosques always have a (basic) men's toilet.

TOURIST INFORMATION **Atatürk International Airport** arrivals hall; **Sirkeci station** (to the left of the main entrance) ☎ 0212 511 5888; **Sultanahmet Meydani** (square) ☎ 0212 518 1802; **Beyazit Meydani** (square) ☎ 0212 522 4902; **opp Hilton Hotel** (Elmadağ) ☎ 0212 233 0592. Unfortunately the service is poor at most offices but at least you can pick up a free city map.

TRAVELERS WITH DISABILITIES With so many cobbled, narrow and steep streets, Istanbul is difficult to get around in a wheelchair. Fortunately access is improving, with lifts at all metro stations and easy access onto trams and some buses. Apart from the top hotels, few 'boutique' Ottoman and traditional hotels have lifts; check before booking.

VISAS All US and European Union passport holders will get a visa on arrival at the airport; pay in dollars, euros or pounds. Most visas are 3-month multiple entry. Check the Turkish Embassy in your country for costs.

WOMEN Turkish men are renowned Romeos, so tread carefully. Traveling alone or in women-only groups will attract attention, some of it unwanted. Say you're married, be firm but polite if the hassling gets too much. The areas of Laleli and Aksaray, known for pockets of red-light district, can warrant hisses and too-close proximity; avoid eye contact and give these guys a wide birth. Long blonde hair attracts attention—if it all gets too much, tie it back or cover up with a scarf or hat.

Istanbul: A Brief History

7TH CENTURY BC First settlement of Istanbul when Megarians flee the Dorian occupation of Greece.

680 BC Megarians cross the Marmara and settle in Chalcedon, today's Kadiköy.

660 BC Megarian commander Byzas leads settlement in Chalcedon, today's Sarayburnu, and names it Byzantium.

318 BC Byzantium taken over by Antigonus, commander of Alexander the Great.

AD 324 Constantine becomes head of the entire Roman Empire, making Byzantium the capital, and is the first Roman ruler to adopt Christianity.

330 Constantine I moves capital of the Roman Empire to Byzantium, renaming it Constantinople, the 'New Rome', soon the chief city of the Western world.

381 Constantinople becomes the seat of the Patriarch, nominal head of the Orthodox church.

412 Theodosius II builds the city walls, enlarging the city.

532 Thousands killed and much of the city burnt in Nika Insurrection, between the Greens and Blues at a Hippodrome chariot race. Emperor Justinian I rebuilds the city; rebuilding of Haghia Sophia starts—the largest church in the Christian world.

1071 Byzantine army defeated by Seljuk Turks in the Battle of Manzikert and lose most of Anatolia, start of the Byzantine Empire's decline.

1082 Venetians allotted quarters in the city with special trading privileges, later joined by the Genoese.

1204 Fourth Crusade burst into the city, forcing emperor into exile and imposing their emperor. Venetians take control of the church. Crusaders rule until 1261, Constantinople's most disastrous period. Sacred relics stolen and dispatched to Western Europe.

1422 Ottoman Sultan Murad II fails in his attempted siege of Constantinople.

1452 Mehmet II builds Rumeli Hisari (fortress) to blockade the Bosphorus.

1453 Mehmet II begins conquest of Constantinople; after 53-day siege troops enter, on 29 May becomes third capital of the Ottoman Empire. The last Byzantine Emperor Constantine XI is killed in battle. The city is renamed Istanbul and rebuilt.

1455 Kapali Çarsişi (Grand Bazaar) is built.

1457 Capital of the Ottoman Empire is transferred from Adrianople (Edirne) to Istanbul.

1459 Misir Çarsişi (Spice Market) is built.

1520–1566 Reign of Süleyman I (Süleyman the Magnificent)—conqueror, lawmaker and commissioner of many magnificent mosques.

1839 Tanzimat reforms begin to modernize and revive Ottoman Empire, influenced by Europe, including secular schooling system and attempted equality between nationalities and religions.

1854 Crimean War sees Ottoman Turks side with British and French against the Russians. Florence Nightingale in charge of military hospitals in Selimiye Army barracks, near Üsküdar.

1915 Ottoman Empire sides with the Central Powers during World War I. Mustafa Kemal thwarts the allies' attempt to force the Dardanelles, hailed as a savior and promoted to colonial, one year later to General.

1918 Ottoman Empire is on the losing side of World War I, the Empire then divided up between European powers.

1919 British and French occupy Istanbul; the empire is dissolved. Anatolia is under occupation by the Greeks.

1920 Mustafa Kemal leads the Turkish War of Independence, leading to the abolition of the Ottoman Empire.

1923 Founding of the Republic of Turkey with Mustafa Kemal, now known as Atatürk, its leader; capital moves from Istanbul to Ankara.

1925 Gregorian calendar officially replaces the Islamic (lunar) calendar; the fez is prohibited.

1928 Turkey officially becomes secular when the clause retaining Islam as the state religion is removed from the constitution. Atatürk starts reforms to modernize Turkey.

1934 Women are given the vote. Atatürk proclaims Ayasofya, previously Haghia Sophia, a national museum.

1938 President Atatürk dies on November 10 at 9.05am; the anniversary and exact time is marked every year. Ismet Inönü is new president.

1945 Turkey declares war on Germany and Japan despite remaining neutral during most of WWII, but no combat. Turkey joins the UN.

1955 Istanbul riots, when many Greeks are forced to leave.

1960 Military coup against the ruling Democratic Party.

1965 Süleyman Demirel becomes prime minister, the first of seven terms of office.

1971 Army forces Demirel's resignation following political violence.

1973 First bridge crossing the Bosphorus was completed, linking Istanbul's European and Asian sides.

1974 Turkish troops invade Northern Cyprus.

1970S Large increase in Istanbul's population with migrants from rural Anatolia.

1980 Military coup follows political deadlock and imposes martial law. Curfew in Istanbul between 2 and 5am.

1982 Military coup and curfew ends; new constitution creates seven-year presidency.

1987 Turkey applies for full EEC membership.

1993 Tansu Çiller becomes Turkey's first (and so far only) woman prime minister.

1999 PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan captured in Kenya; received death sentence, later commuted to life imprisonment. August 17, huge earthquake reaching 6.7 on the Richter scale hits Izmit and affects many buildings in Greater Istanbul, killing more than 23,000 people.

2002 Turkish men no longer seen in law as head of the family, giving women full legal equality with men. Turkey reaches the semi-finals of the soccer World Cup, beaten by Brazil.

2003 Truck bombs kill a total of 53 people and wound 700 in attacks on Neve Shalom synagogue (Nov 15) and British Consulate (Nov 17). Al Qaeda claim responsibility.

2004 State TV broadcasts its first Kurdish-language program, previously banned in Turkey. Istanbul hosts the NATO summit.

2005 New Turkish Lira (YTL) introduced, replacing the old lira and knocking off six zeros. Negotiations for Turkey to join the EU officially launched after intense bargaining.

2006 Istanbul author Orhan Pamuk wins Nobel Prize in Literature. Marmaray project, the tunnel being built under the Bosphorus to link the European and Asian sides of Istanbul, is delayed when a 4th-century port is uncovered.

2007 Armenian community leader and editor of Turkish-Armenian newspaper Agos Hrant Dink is assassinated outside his office in Istanbul by ultra-nationalist, provoking outrage. AK Party wins parliamentary election; Abdullah Gul elected president.

2008 Turkish Parliament votes to lift the ban on women students wearing Islamic headscarf at university. Thousands protest, fearing it goes against the country's secular principles.

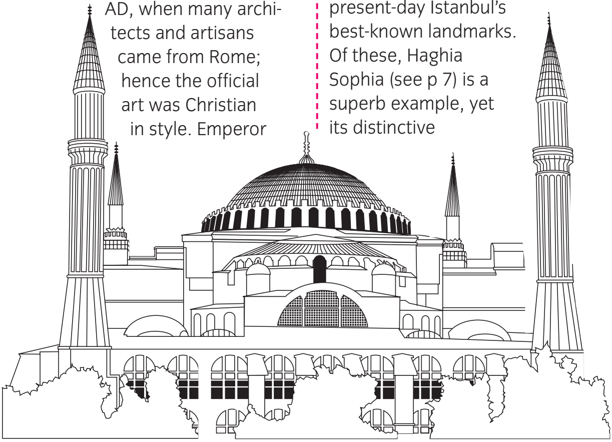
2009 Smoking ban comes into force in Turkey on July 1.

2010 Istanbul is European Capital of Culture.

Art & Architecture **Highlights**

Byzantine Empire (330–1453)

This was the city's most significant period for art, **beginning with** Emperor Constantine's building his new capital from 330 AD, when many architects and artisans came from Rome; hence the official art was Christian in style. Emperor Justinian (483–565AD) was the most significant during the Byzantine Empire's 11-century reign, rebuilding the battered city after the Nika Revolt in 532AD, creating present-day Istanbul's best-known landmarks. Of these, Haghia Sophia (see p 7) is a superb example, yet its distinctive



red-brick exterior is far from glamorous. For the Byzantines, exteriors were unimportant, as attention went to the all-important interior, which glittered with religious art, mosaics and frescoes, also seen in Kariye Museum, formerly Chora Church (see p 20).

Here, the central dome was adorned with a mosaic or fresco of Christ the Pantocrator, below that angels and archangels, with figures of saints on the walls and often the Virgin Mary on a high dome. Figures were static with flat areas of color, frontal pose, and characteristic use of gold background. Below that would be the congregations, forming a microcosm of the universe.

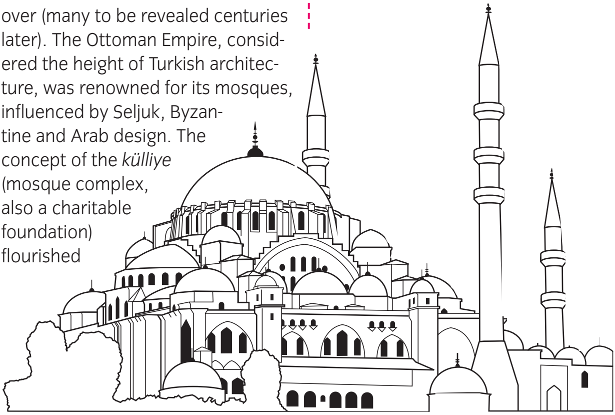
Justinian also constructed viaducts and underground cisterns, enlarging Emperor Constantine's Yerebatan Sarnici (Baslicia Cistern) in 532AD (see p 16).

Ottoman Empire (1453–1920s)

Soon after conquering the city in 1453, Mehmet II did little to the exterior of churches and basilicas, other then adding minarets and consecrating as mosques. However, figurative art was forbidden in Islam, seen as detracting from pious thoughts, so mosaics and frescoes were covered over (many to be revealed centuries later). The Ottoman Empire, considered the height of Turkish architecture, was renowned for its mosques, influenced by Seljuk, Byzantine and Arab design. The concept of the *külliye* (mosque complex, also a charitable foundation) flourished under Süleyman I (1494–1566), typically with the mosque in a walled courtyard, outside of which was a *medrese* (religious school), soup kitchens, orphanage, travelers' lodgings, hospital and *hamam*. Also under Suleyman I calligraphic art flourished, especially the elaborate writing of Qu'rans. Here, Arabic script was written in highly decorative form, adding aesthetic form to scripture. Later sultans developed (with the help of top calligraphers) their tuğra, a personal monogram with ornamental loops.

Sinan's mosques typically had cascading domes, appearing almost weightless. His Süleymaniye mosque (built 1550–1557; see *Best In One Day* p 6) is a masterpiece; a *külliye* built on one of the city's seven hills, using the vast central dome as its key feature, plus distinctive slender minarets which distinguished Ottoman mosques. Typically they had a vast inner space, huge central dome, plus semi-domes, vaults and columns, creating a place of space and serenity.

Sinan's hamams—best seen at Cemberlitas hamam (see p 22) or Roxelana's baths (see p 74)—also made full use of glorious domes.



Best seen in Rüstem Paşa mosque (see p 9) and Sultanahmet (Blue) Mosque (p 15) is the use of tiles, especially from the city of Iznik. This made the most of abstract patterns, often designs of flowers and trees.

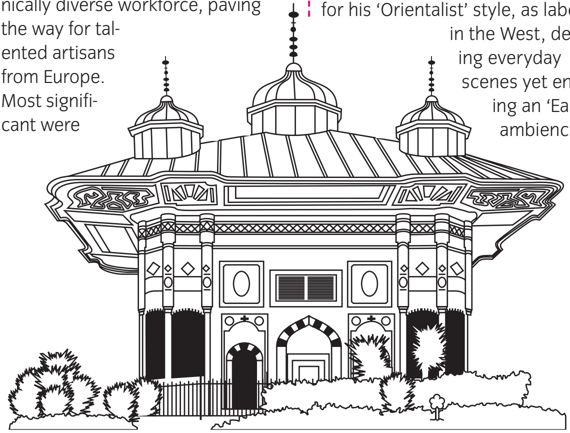
Turkish Baroque

This era in the early 18th century indicated the end of the classical period; a gradual Westernization of Ottoman lifestyle, using curves, floral patterns and motifs best seen at the fountain of Ahmet III (1728) near Topkapi Palace's entrance, reflecting the fusion of traditional Ottoman and contemporary Western styles. Such fountains usually had a large square block with wall fountains at the centre of each façade, with the marble surfaces of the kiosk carved with floral patterns and decorated with calligraphic panels. The roof projected outwards, forming large eves that shaded the walls.

Late Ottomans and the Tanzimat Declaration

Under Abdul Mecit (1823–1861), the Tanzimat Declaration (1839) was a series of modernizing reforms for the Ottoman Empire to compete with Europe. This created an ethnically diverse workforce, paving the way for talented artisans from Europe. Most significant were the Armenian-born Balyan family—a five-generation dynasty of Ottoman imperial architects (c1700–1894)—who built with a Western European style under a total of six sultans, changing the architectural appearance of the country. Their mosques moved from spiritual ambience to the ornamental, as seen at Ortaköy mosque in 1854 (see *Best in Three Days* p 18), combining baroque, Romantic and Oriental architecture. Other important Balyan creations include Dolmabahçe (1856) and Beylerbeyi palaces (1865).

The late Ottoman Empire saw the period of Orientalist painters, and the first 'proper' professional artists. Previously, Ottoman painting was dominated to portraiture of the sultans by Renaissance painters. From the 19th century, Istanbul was visited by European diplomats, merchants and painters, who painted everyday Ottoman life, seen as 'bringing the Orient home'. The late 19th-century saw the first Ottoman painters travel to Paris, including Osman Hamdi and Şeker Ahmet Paşa (1847–1907)—to study, ironically, under the French Orientalist painters), returning to Istanbul establish the first Art Academies. Of those, Osman Hamdi is best known for his 'Orientalist' style, as labeled in the West, depicting everyday scenes yet enhancing an 'Eastern' ambience.



Turkish Republic

The early 20th century saw Art Nouveau influences, including Italian architect Raimondo d'Aronco who created modern structures using elements of Islamic architecture. Motifs of stonework, wood, wrought iron and glass were a statement of social standing and modernization, especially in Beyoğlu (known as Pera pre-1923), then the epitome of modern living. Today's Istiklal Caddesi (see *Neighborhood Walks* p 52) still has superb exterior features from this era. Once Atatürk formed the Turkish republic in 1923 and shifted the capital to Ankara, modern architectural development stalled. Latest additions, however, have seen stunning contemporary additions, especially Kanyon (see *Modern Istanbul* p 28). An exciting new project that began in early 2008 is the urban transformation by Zaha Hadid (Iraqi-born architect, b 1950); her cutting-edge plans for a 555-hectare site stretch from the Marmara on the Asian side at Kartal Park, comprising business and residential towers.

Useful Phrases

Most people working in hotels and restaurants speak a smattering of English, but elsewhere don't bank on it. There are a few letters that are pronounced differently in Turkish but once you learn these, the language is totally phonetic so easy to read. Put equal emphasis on each syllable, and pronounce every letter; for example don't fall into the trap of pronouncing 'ph' like an 'f'. The main letters to look out for are ç (pronounced 'ch'); ş ('sh'), c ('j'), ö ('or,' as in 'work'), ğ (silent, just elongate the vowel following it), ı ('e' as in 'the').

Everyday Phrases

ENGLISH	TURKISH	PRONOUNCED AS:
Hello	**Merhaba**	*merhaba*
How are you?	**Nasılsınız?**	*nasulsunuz?*
Goodbye	**Güle güle**	*gul-eh gul-eh*
Thank you (very much)	**Teşekkür (erderim)**	*teshekur erderim*
Please	**Lütfen**	*lutfen*
I don't know	**Bilmiyorum**	*bilmiyorum*
Yes/No	**Evet/hayır**	*evet/hayur*
How much?	**Ne kadar/kaç lira?**	*ne kadar/kach lira?*
I don't understand	**Anlamıyorum**	*anlamuh-yorum*
I can't speak Turkish	**Türkçe bilmiyorum**	*Turk-cheh bilmiyorum*
Do you speak English?	**Ingilizce biliyor musunuz?**	*Ingiliz-jeh biliyor musunuz?*
Where is the…(toilet)?	**(Tuvalet) …nerede?**	*Tuvalet neh-reh-deh?*
Can you write it down?	**Yazar mısınız?**	*Yazar musunuz?*
left/right	**sol/sağ**	*sol/saah*
Ladies	**Bayan**	*bay-an*
Gents	**Bey**	*bey*
mosque	**Camii**	*jar-mi*
museum	**Müzesi**	*muh-zesi*
church	**kilise**	*kili-seh*
OK, fine	**Tamam**	*tamam*

ENGLISH	TURKISH	PRONOUNCED AS:
Do you have any rooms?	Boş odanız var mı?	*bosh odanuz var muh?*
For one night	Bir gece için	*beer geh-jeh ichin*
With shower	Duşlu	*dush-lu*
Can I see the room?	Odayı görebilir miyim?	*odayu gure-bilir miyim?*
Do you have any . . .	. . . var mı?	*. . . var muh?*
The room is	Oda . . .	*oda . . .*
. . . too hot/	cok sicak/	*chok suhjak/*
cold/small	soguk/küçük	*so-uk/kuchuk*
The bill please	Hesap lütfen	*hesap lut-fen*
My name is . . .	Ismim...	*ismim . . .*
I don't feel well	Iyi hissetmiyorum	*Iyi hisset-miyorum*
I need a doctor	(Ingilizce bilen) doktor	*(Ingiliz-jeh bilen) doktor*
(who speaks English)	lazim	*laz-um*

Numbers

ENGLISH	TURKISH	PRONOUNCED AS:
1	bir	*beer*
2	iki	*iki*
3	üç	*uch*
4	dört	*durt*
5	beş	*besh*
6	altı	*alt-uh*
7	yedi	*yedi*
8	sekiz	*sekiz*
9	dokuz	*dokuz*
10	on	*on*
11	on bir	*on beer*
12	on iki	*on iki*
20	yirmi	*yirmi*
21	yirmi bir	*yirmi beer*
30	otuz	*otuz*
40	kirk	*kurk*
50	elli	*el-li*
60	altmis	*alt-mush*
70	yetmiş	*yetmish*
80	seksen	*seksen*
90	doksan	*doksan*
100	yüz	*yewz*
200	iki yüz	*iki yewz*
210	iki yüz on	*iki yewz on*
What time it it?	Saat kaç?	*Saat kach?*
It's 10 o'clock	Saat on	*Saat on*
It's 2.30	Saat iki buçuk	*Saat iki buchuk*

Days of the Week

Monday	Pazartesi	*pazartesi*
Tuesday	Salı	*sar-luh*
Wednesday	Çarşamba	*char-shamba*
Thursday	Perşembe	*per-shembeh*
Friday	Cuma	*jumah*
Saturday	Cumartesi	*jumah-tesi*
Sunday	Pazar	*pazar*

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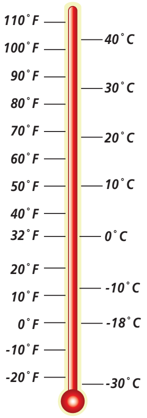
CLOTHING SIZES

WOMEN			MEN			CHILDREN	
UK	US	Europe	UK Metric (cm)	US	Europe	UK Metric (Ht cm)	US
8	6	36	91	36	46	109	4
10	8	38	97	38	48	122	6
12	10	40	102	40	50	140	8
14	12	42	107	42	52	147	10
16	14	44	112	44	54	152	12
18	16	46				157	14
20	18	48					

METRIC CONVERSIONS

TEMPERATURE



To convert F to C:
subtract 32 and multiply by $^5/_9$ (.555)

To convert C to F:
multiply by 1.8 and add 32

32° F = 0° C

DISTANCE

To convert	*multiply by*
inches to centimeters	*2.54*
centimeters to inches	*.39*
feet to meters	*.30*
meters to feet	*3.28*
yards to meters	*.91*
meters to yards	*1.09*
miles to kilometers	*1.61*
kilometers to miles	*.62*

1 ft = .30 m
1 mile = 1.6 km
1 m = 3.3 ft
1 km = .62 mile

WEIGHT

To convert	*multiply by*
Ounces to grams	*28.35*
Grams to ounces	*.035*
Pounds to kilograms	*.45*
Kilograms to pounds	*2.20*

1 ounce = 28 grams
1 pound = .4555 kilogram

1 gram = .04 ounce
1 kilogram = 2.2 pounds

LIQUID VOLUME

To convert	*multiply by*
Gallons to liters	*4.55*
Liters to gallons	*.22*
Pints to liters	*.56*
Liters to pints	*1.76*

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